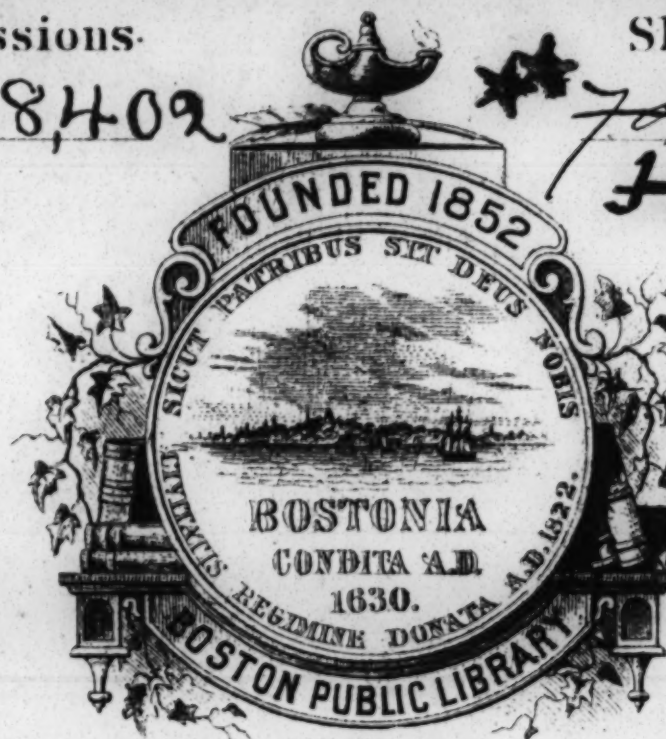


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SEVERAL
SERMONS:

Some PREACHED in
ENGLAND,

And some in the Island of
BARBADOS
IN
AMERICA

Upon several Occasions.

By Robert Scamler M. A. and Rector of Taver-
ham in the County of Norfolk.

*Lord, whilst I Preach unto others, let not my self
be a cast away.*

Printed by Nathaniel Thompson for the Author 1685.

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May 20, 1862

TO HER
Grace MARY Dutcheſs
OF
BEUFORT.

Madam,

I Ad I been affected with that Itching Humour of Ambition to raiſe an Obeliſk to my Memory, and leave behind me ſome Tokens, that I once Liv'd, and had a Being and Exiſtence upon Earth: How could I have contriv'd a more Glorious method for the Ereſting this Eternal Monument, than by fixing Your Graces Name to theſe my poor weak Endeavours? For, who (ſeeing Your Honour'd Name ſet before the Book,) will not be invited (by the Fairneſs of ſuch a Frontiſpiece) to look into the Sermons, and even practice the Duties intimated therein?

Madam, I confeſs it high Preſumption, and I humbly beg your Graces Pardon for borrowing your Name and Patronage, becauſe it looks like a deſign in me, that if there be no other worth in the Diſcourſes, yet at leaſt they may have the Virtues and Advantages of a Burning-Glaſs,

The Epistle Dedicatory.

Glass, which borrowing a Flame from the Great Eye of Heaven, Shines and Burns, not of it self, but by the Rays and Emanations of its Bright Patron and Benefactor: I will not pretend to vindicate my self from so Holy a Suspicion, though something more Enobled my Desires to present Your Grace with this humble Dedication: For I do confidently avow (not to Affront the Modesty so Innate to Your Temper, or come within the Sphere of Flattery, so repugnant to my Genius,) that the Noble Perfections wherewith Heaven hath Accomplished You, have render'd You so Publickly Acquainted to the World, that he must not only be a Stranger to himself, but even to all Humane Society and Converse, who converse, who have not been sensibly surpriz'd in the Admiration of Your Virtues: Virtues which you Suckled in even with Your Milk, and have Thrived with so daily an Encrease in the Sequel of Your Life, that they might justly Challenge Shrines and Altars from us, if Your Humility did not signifie unto us a Reprimand. These are such Truths, that I dare not proceed to say any thing further concerning your Graces Perfections, because it is impossible for me (had I the Tongue of Angels) to express my self in a method proportionable to my Theam. I might, it is possible, suggest and hint to present and future Ages, that Your Natural and Particular Inclinations are those Virtues; yes, and in a much more Eminent Degree, which Deified far less Deserving Persons:

The Epistle Dedicatory.

sons : May further, if some most Sweet and Angelical Tongue does not contrive some new Language to Posterity, wherein to Celebrate and Proclaim Aloud the Embellishments and Graces wherewith Heaven hath Endowed You ; it must Silently Content it self to Reverence the Name, and Adore the Memory of the most Virtuous and Illustrious Lady, MARY Dutches of Beufort, without presumption of Speech of Your Actions, because they transcend Expression as well as Imitation.

What need I to repeat the Immortality of Your Augustick Family, the Sun shall sooner be displaced from its Orbe, the Stars forget their Motions, than Mankind forget to Celebrate the most Heroick, Loyal and Glorious Atchievements of the most Generous and Honourable Capel ? And Madam, You being one of the Noble Branches proceeding from that Loyal Stem, to whom can I Address my self more properly in a Sermon on the Thirtieth of January, then unto Your Grace ? For not only Charles the First, but likewise the Honourable Capel fell Sacrifices to a Usurping Power, and both died Glorious Martyrs in Defence of Church and State.

May it please Your Grace then to accept these Discourses, though presented by a mean Hand, for they are intended for no other purpose ; then to convince unreasonable and Wicked men of their Damnable and Hellish Practices against the Church and State, and what Indefatigable Labours they Groan under to effect their
Diabolical

The Epistle Dedicatory.

Diabolical Designs : But God grant that all our Nobility may Unanimously Resolve a perfect Conquest and Subjection of these Engineers of Satan and Builders of Babel, that the Peace and Happiness, Truth and Justice, Religion and Piety may be Establish'd amongst us and all succeeding Generations, which is Instantly Pray'd for by

Your Graces most

Humbly Devoted

Servant

R. SCAMLER.

E R R A T A

IN the Epistle Dedicatory, Page 2. l. 13, and 14. dele *who converse*. p. 4. l. 5. dele *the*. In the Book, p. 1. l. 2. r. *Show*, l. 6. r. *pearly*, p. 4. l. 27. r. *constituted*, p. 7. l. 21. dele *the*, p. 9. l. 13. r. *at his own Royal door*, l. 18. r. *pearly*, l. 21. r. *more mild and Gentle* p. 11. l. 2. r. *and a great*, p. 12. l. 17. dele *the*, p. 14. l. 12. r. *Feats*, p. 15. l. 27. r. *con-* *cern*, p. 19. l. 2. r. *begin at*, *is the House of God*, l. 7. r. *that Queen*, p. 21. l. 28. r. *For were* *they strict*, l. 32. dele *of*, p. 25. l. 1. r. *professing*, p. 26. l. 25. r. *as is too*, p. 28. l. 13. r. *con-* *ceive*, p. 34. l. 13. r. *light of*, l. 21. dele *if*, l. 23. r. *attributed to us*, p. 36. l. 11. r. *sure the* **A** *polluted*, l. 18. r. *creeps*, l. 25. r. *is called*, p. 43. l. 14. r. *as it did*, l. 15. r. *Massah*, l. 27. r. *nothing is more*, p. 44. l. 8. r. *in excuses and denials*, l. 20. *an hour hence*, p. 45. l. 3. dele *thin*, p. 46. l. 1. dele *pure*, p. 47. l. 25. r. *Now*, p. 50. l. 2. r. *accepted*, l. 31. r. *but much*, p. 51. l. 19. r. *seem*, p. 54. l. 16. r. *my Wickedness*, and *be*, p. 56. l. 8. r. *the next Festival*, p. 57. l. 1. r. *as the early*, l. 16. dele *the*, l. 22. r. *Zylander*, l. 25. r. *ten Attick*, p. 58. l. 1. r. *them one*, p. 62. l. 14. r. *irrecoverable*, l. 25. r. *Natural propensions*, p. 64. l. 16. r. *Fomes*, l. 23. dele *the*, p. 65. l. 20. dele *it*, p. 66. l. 4. r. *Flattering*, p. 67. l. 12. *as a mo-* p. 68. l. 19. r. *good dwells*. p. 79. l. r. *of a Timorous*.

A
SERMON

Preached on the Martyrdom of
King CHARLES the I.
The Thirtieth of *January*.

2 Sam. 1st. 12th.

*And they Mourned, and Wept, and Fasted until Even
for Saul, and for Jonathan his Son, and for the
People of the Lord, and for the House of Israel, be-
cause they were fallen by the Sword.*

They Mourned — And where is that sullen Stoick?
Shew me the Man that can condemn this their
Pious Mourning? Who can deny a Tear at such
a sad Solemnity? Where is that flinty breast that
can forbear to Sorrow in such a case? No Loyal Subject to
the Thron of *Saul* can be so base, as to deny a yearly Subsidy,
when Princes Hearses claim it as its due? Natural Affection
will break forth into Sighs and Tears at the Corruption of
what we Love; when that grim Serjeant of Nature, Death,
B hath

hath snatcht from us any, link'd unto us by the tyes of Friendship; How do we dissolve into Tears! How great are our Grievs and Sorrows!

Now if we be judg'd insensible, for our not relenting the loss of Friends? What brand of shame and Infamy do they deserve, who neither Mourn, Weep, or Fast when a *Cypress Vail* hath over-spread the *Royal Diadem*? Shall we not be Dejected and Sorrowful, when the Sword of Death hath cut off Him in whose Hand alone rested the Sword of Justice? Shall not We Fast and Weep at the Fatal Catastrophe of *Saul* and *Jonathan*? Are not our Souls Elemented, as it were, of nothing but Sadness, when our Ears are pierced with the lamentable news of the fall of the People of the Lord, accompanied with the sad misfortune of the House of *Israel*. *Moses's* Death may justly command a Brinish shower, but much more if accompanied with that of *Aaron*; if *King* and *Priest*, *Nobles* and *Subjects*, *Lords* and *Commons* be involv'd in the same misfortune, then certainly we must want words, to express the bitterness of our Grievs. *Niobe* found a vent for her Passion, when made unhappy by the loss of one, or two, of her little Babes; but when rob'd of all, she became Insensible. *Cura leves loquuntur*. They are Inferior Evils admit of Tears, but those of a Superior Nature are unexpressible. When *Church* and *State*, *King* and *Priest* are partakers of one and the same Calamity; what moderation can be expected in our Elegiack Threnes and Mournful Lamentations? For where can we find words to express the Conflicts and Agonies of our Souls? Yet still the misfortunes are far greater, which give occasion to this lamentation in the House of *David*, for when the *Amalickite* had told them the pitiful and fatal overthrow of *Saul* and *Jonathan* by the *Philistines* Army, then the Text tells us, *They Mournd, and Wept, and Fasted, &c.*

Mourning, Weeping and Fasting were the Dutiful, as well as Holy Performances of all pertaining to the Family of *David*, and ought not that to be this days chief work in the Houses of us all? For God hath commanded me to acquaint you, that every Master of a Family, and all that are under his Protection, should by Fasting serve the Lord; and the neglect thereof will be justly imputed to the Masters Charge at the great and solemn day of Account.

The *Hebrew* word for *Mourning*, which the *Vulgar Latin* render *Plangentes*, signifies *Funebri ritu Lugere*, a *Funeral Mourning*; and does not this days Duty command the same: *David* and his Family bemoaned the Effusion of *Royal Blood*, and is not That the dismal occasion of this days Lamentation; Lace befits not a Mourning Suit, expect not then Flourishes of *Rhetorick* in a Mourning Sermon. On such a Day, and Text, as this, the Preachers words should be Sighs, his Accents Groans, and the Auditors Tears the best Commendation of the Discourse: For this end I appear amongst you this day, though (not as my Saviour in another case) to send fire, but as the Woman at the Well to draw water, that the Kingdom of *England* may become like that where the Angel of the Lord deliver'd his doleful Message to the *Israelites*, *Bochin, a place of Weepers*! And oh! how happy will it be, if, as when all *Israel* were gathered together at *Mizpeth*, so when all Subjects pertaining to the Crown of *England*, being Assembled together in the House of God, may draw water, and pour forth their Prayers before the Lord, for the *Royal Blood*, which as on this day was poured out, and spilt as water upon the ground; that so we may imitate the example of the Royal Prophet, and his Domesticks, *Who Mourned, and Wept, and Fasted, &c.*

The Text may afford us many Particulars, but least I seem tedious, I shall contract my Meditations into these Two.

The Persons Mourning, and the persons Mourned for.

Consider we the first.

And it were needless to dwell upon a Theme obvious to all who consult this Chapter ; For who are they ? But *David* and his Family, and those who are of his Retinue, at the first accosting the *Amalikites*, that Condoled the hard Fate of *Saul* and *Jonathan* ? For though he was disaffected to *David*, an adversary who hunted after his Life, and from whom he had escaped, as a bird from the hand of the Fowler : Nevertheless *David* forgets not to commiserate His, and his Nobles condition : Nay, though God himself had rent the Kingdom from *Saul*, and conveyed it over unto *David* ; yet still he Song his *Elegy*, that he might not go to the Grave unlamented ; and he gives the reason of this, in his Tenderneſs and Pity to *Saul*, who was so Cruel unto him, why he was so troubled for his Death ; who should be no ſooner dead, then his own Head should be incircled with the Royal Diadem ; and that was, because he was Anointed with Oyl. None that are Anointed with Oyl, but ought to have a Tribute of Salt Tears pay'd unto their Hearſe. By the Laws of Friendship, he was oblig'd to be concern'd for the Death of *Jonathan* ; but as for *Saul*, who ſtudied his deſtruction, and laboured his ruine ; who was his inveterate Enemy, and wholly bent to do him miſchief ; whence cou'd it proceed, but from an unfeigned Reſpect, and untainted Loyalty to his Prince ? an Obedience and Love to him, whom God had instituted his Vicegerent over *Israel*, and it is on that account we read, they Mourned, &c.

2. *I deſcend to the Persons Mourned for.*

And who are they ? But *King*, *Priest*, and *Commons* ; and indeed, all of us are equally concerned to Mourn and Weep for

for their *Saul's* and *Jonathan*, for their *Priest*, the People of the Lord, and for their Brethren, the whole House of *Israel*, when they are cropt by the Seyth of an immature and sudden death ; we have a Duty incumbent on us to Mourn, and Fast, and Humble our selves, when God punishes Kings for the sakes of our Sins by an unripe and untimely Death. Common reason will teach nature to pay a more than ordinary Tribute of Sighs and Tears at the last Obsequies of them who move in the highest Sphere ; publick Persons Hearses may justly challenge the Distillation of private Persons Eyes ; all Rivulets and little Torrents empty themselves into the main Ocean : Can any man forbid, or fault this Holy Water ? Who would not be Baptized in such a Fountain ? Dethroned Princes have had this paid them by their Enslav'd Subjects. *Cum nil nisi flere reliquum.* When they were not capacitated to do more, their grateful and generous Spirits disdain'd to do less. Eminent persons, in all Ages have been thus bemoaned by the Church of God ; not only those who have been blasted in the greenness and tenderness of their Age, in their most precious days, but those also who have dropt away with Age, and been gathered to their Fathers, by the long Rake of silent Time ; Thus the Sons of *Jacob* bewailed their Aged Father seven days, with great and sore Lamentation. Thus when *Moses* the Faithful Prince and Ruler of his People fell asleep, all *Israel* mourned for him thirty days in the Plains of *Moab*. Thus *Judah* and *Jerusalem* bemoaned the death of their King *Josiah* ; And thus *David* and his Family Wept and Fasted for the death of *Saul* and *Jonathan*. That Light shining in the dark Lanthorn of our Bodies, (I mean the the Light of Nature wherewith we are invested,) hath taught all Nations to Reverence their Kings whilst Living, and to Condole them being Dead, Thus the *Romans* erected Funeral Piles and Massy Columns in Memory of their *Cæsars*.

Jus gentium est obedire Regibus, The Law of Nations hath consented, that Homage and Obedience is due to them who sit at the Helm of State; And what is the Law of Nations, but the Law of God Engraven in the Heart? And what is the Law of *Christians*, but the Will of God written not only in the Heart, but also express'd unto us in the most lively Characters of Holy Writ. As then none better instructed in the Principles of governing Subjects, then *Christian Kings*; so none more, and clearly convinc'd of the Fealty due to Kings, then Subjects Professing *Christianity*; And therefore They should better understand the value of a King, and consequently be more nearly touched for his loss. Whatsoever the *Babylonians* did for *Nebuchadnezzar*, or the *Persians* for their *Cyrus*; That did *David* and his Family for *Saul* and *Jonathan*. Peace and Happiness, Prosperity and Safety, are so strictly tyed to Sovereignty, and entail'd upon the Crown, that a Churches Glory and Nations Safety depend upon the strict maintaining the *Royal Prerogative*. For all our Felicity is held in *Capite*, and where a Princes Honour is but faintly maintain'd, and begins to languish, the Subjects Property must decay and perish.

The King of Poets relates concerning those Illustrious Creatures Bees, *Rege incolumi, mens omnibus una est — Amisso Rupere fidem* — When their King is lost, instead of Honey they have nothing but Gall; their pretty contrived waxen Fabricks are easily demolish'd, and Drones devour and run away with the Fruits of all their pains and care: After the same manner it fares with Men, if the King be gone, what can we expect but Factions, and Fractions, Sects and Schisms; then Armed Swarms encounter, and fall down dead together, as though they agreed in nothing but a resolution how to disagree among themselves. When the Head is ill, all the Members are out of Temper, and complain of smart: So ominous is the Death of a King to a whole

whole Nation, that well may *David* and his Family Mourn, and Fast for *Saul*, and *Jonathan* his Son.

By how much Kings excel in Virtue, by so much the more their Corruption from us increase our Floods of Grief, making our Tears to swell beyond its margent; But be they never so bad or wicked, they must not go to their long home un-attended with a weeping Eye, and a bleeding Heart. Let them be *Josias*'s or *Sauls*, we have still an Injunction on us to Fast and Mourn, which calls to remembrance that old Woman *Hymara*, who seldom fail'd a day to Pray to God to prolong the Life of that Tyrant *Dionisius*, which exprest her not only more Loyal, but far Wiser than those, whose Hearts and Heads are ever given to Change, with whom it is the Advice of the wisest of men to have nothing to do: The event and consequence of every Change is dubious and un-intelligible; a Kings translation often proves as a Prologue to a Nations Tragedy, that the World may understand there is a genuine Sympathy between King and People, as well as between the Head and Body natural.

'Tis not the *Sun*, but the Sublunary Creatures suffer by the *Suns* Eclipse; He must be more than blind, that reads not Gods anger in the loss of a good King, when he himself hath given us to understand, it is none of the highest of his Judgements to constitute a bad one to Rule over us, *I gave thee a King in my anger, and I took him away in my wrath*: Nay we may observe how Holy *David* discerned Gods anger against the Land in *Sauls* overthrow, and how sensible he was of it, insomuch that he not only Mourns and Fasts, but he even curses the place where the Armies of *Saul* and the *Philistines* Forces disputed their Valour. *Ye mountains of Gilboa, let there be no Dew nor Rain upon you, nor Fields of Offerings, for there the Shield of the Mighty was vilely cast away, the Shield of Saul, as though he had not been Anointed*.

Anointed with Oyl, verse 21. For so much is a Nation concerned to bewail the fall of a Prince, though of a *Saul*, and rejected of God; for thus did *David* and his Family.

They Mourned, and Wept, and Fasted, &c.

I have now finished the Text, and I am still to begin my Sermon; For if *David* thus Mourned and Fasted for *Saul* and *Jonathan*, what Groans and Sighs mayst thou expect, O blessed Martyr, whose Blood on this day we Traiterously shed? How shall we expiate this our Offence? If *David* lamented the Death of *Saul* occasion'd by the accidents of War, how ought We to Mourn bitterly, who contrived thy Murder? and Confederated against thee? *David* took not up Arms against *Saul*, yet still he Wept, and Mourned, much more then ought We, who not only Rebelled against thee: But O damnable Impiety! Even Betray'd, Bought, and Sold Thee? Who pretended a Law, and erected a Scaffold to Butcher thee, making thy Royal Pallace an *Akeldama*, or field of Blood: No, what an *Amalekite* did, the Royal Prophet lamented, Bathing his Hearse with Tears, and embalming his memory with a set form of Lamentation, for they Mourned, and Wept, and Fasted, &c.

But our case is more deplorable than that of *Sauls*, and hath the nearest relation to that of the Blessed Jesus, who *inter malitiam & avaritiam*, between the Malice of some, and Ambition of others (as Christ between the Theeves) was Crucified. Here a *Judas* come from that cursed Clymate the North with a *Quantum dabitis*, what shall be the Reward of my Treason, and I will betray and Sell him? There a Temporizing Courtier who Eate his Bread at his Table, lifted up his Heel against him. O! that our Heads for these things were Rivers of Water, and our Eyes a Fountain of Tears, for the Beauty of *England* is slain, and he who cloathed us in Scarlet, cut off by an Ax wheted at *Geneva*, and sharpen'd at *Amsterdam*. But oh wretched Stupidity!

How

How unwilling are we to credit these Reports! Being ambitious as it were to run the same risque of Confusion! Will it not appear strange, and unparallel'd in Story, that a Nation should be twice ruin'd, twice undone, by the self-same ways and means? How! Weep for the King? The very pronounciation of such a word not many years since, would have cost a man his Life; to Rail, Revile, or Blaspheme him, call him *Papistical* Tyrant, Traytor, Murtherer, Plunder and undo all that stand up for him, lay Hands on him, Imprison and Arraign him as a Malefactor, Condemn him, and carry him in triumph to his Execution. Though to the affront of Heaven, and him that dwelleth therein; yea, Murther him at his Royal Door, though contrary to all Examples of Story, Precepts of God and Law of Nations; no matter for Religion or President, *This is the Heir, come let us Kill him, and seize on the Inheritance. Quistalia fando temperat à lacrymis?* Where is thy Eye, O flint hearted Stoick, whose Limbeck will refuse to pay a yearly Tribute at this Sacred Shrine, who was the Glory of *Europe*, and shame of his own degenerate People? Born it is true in *Scotland*, but he breathed more Gentile Gales than those of *Northern* Blasts: Nay had he not been Born there, I would have said, and as properly, as *Nathanael* did of *Nazereth*, *Can any good thing come from thence?* Joh. 1. 46. Nay, may we not read the Characters of Divine Wrath imprinted on those Cursed *Judas's* and Hellish Varlets to avenge the Blood of this Righteous *Abel*, for as the Offence was equal to that of *Cain's*; so travail the World and you'll read the Punishment shall be the same, Vagabonds and Wanderers shall they be: He was a King who was an absolute Conqueror over himself, to whom his Passions, (those attendants on Humane Nature,) yeilded a more intire Obedience, than the Kingdoms he Ruled over; For those did never Mutiny, but his Kingdoms Loyalty, let this day witness.

Should I conduct you into that large field of Divine Fancies, manifested in his Books, you would absolutely conclude the *Coal* which the *Seraphim* laid on *Esfays's* lips, was bestowed on his Pen, for they consist of such Ravishing and Eloquent strains, that none can read them but with Wonder and Reverence; some accurate Pencil might give some faint and weak resemblances of his Personage, but who can delineate the Complexion of his Soul, so Faithfully as he hath copyed out Himself unto Us in his Writings, where we may read his zeal truly ballanced, with deep and profound Knowledge, Piety and Modesty, his Grief for the Ruines of the Church, and Miseries of his People, his Care for his Friends, and Charity for his Enemies, his Commiseration of others, and Courage in his own Afflictions; and in all so even a Temper, that he resembled none but him who at his Cross did say, *Father forgive them, they know not what they do.*

In short, he was a true *Beuclerk*, as much a Schollar as a Prince, and more a Christian than either; He was, and is, not only to this Nation, but all *Christendom*; a Mirrour to think how he Lived, and a Grief to consider how he Died.

Thus fell that shining Star, whose Light over-spread the whole Earth, and the Royal Dignity Suffer'd an Eclipse in the Greatest King that ever was.

Let us then Weep and Fast, to think how we have rendered our selves guilty of Innocent Blood; if the guilt of a Brothers Blood cryed to Heaven for Vengeance; how much more the Blood of a Father, the common Father of three Christian Kingdoms? If *Sauls* death was so deplorable, (yet he a wicked Person, and the *Phylistines* none of his Subjects) then how much more in this case, where wicked Subjects, Subjects said I? Nay rather the dung of the Earth, like *Baanah* and *Rhechab*, have Murthered a Righteous Man, and their most Gracious King. How

How ought this to afflict us? *Know you not that there is a Prince, a great man fallen this day in our Israel* — He is fallen, and his fall accompanied with that of the Nobility and Gentry, Laws and Justice, with the fall of Church and Religion, Doctrine and Discipline, Piety and Morality; let us Mourn then that our sins of Scarlet may be made white by the Blood of Christ. I am charitably perswaded, all in this Assembly did detest this Bloody Action with the greatest Horrour and Indignation: Nevertheless we must all acknowledge our selves guilty of his Blood, because they were our sins, the sins of the whole Nation, which provoked God to thunder down Vengeance on us in the Person of our Shepherd, that so we, the sheep might be smitten. It was of thy Mercy, O Lord, thy Mercy alone, O praised be that Mercy! That we were not utterly consumed, when for many years together, our Cornutes were turned into Fifes, our Dances into Marches, and our Banquets into want of Bread, and our Livery-Gowns into Buff-Coats, and our Suits of Gold into Glittering Armour, and our Beavers into Hemlets? How was the Pride of our Cupboard, and our Fingers Glory, turned into Soldiers Sallaries, and the price of Blood? How were our Girdles turned into Belts, and our Gowns and Cassocks, into Coats of Mail? Our Lofty Houses into Garrisons, and our stately Edifices into Prisons, our Temples into Stables, and the House the Lord, the House of Prayer, into a Den of Theeves?

So soon as the Lords Anointed was slain, the whole Nation went disorderly, and proved out of Course; when our Prince of Peace, *Charles the First*, was taken from among us, then presently sprung up Briars and Brambles, more Cruel than Tigers, that rifled from Drums of Silver into the Bowels of their own flesh, and would either Kill, or Die, for a days Wages; no sooner was Sovereignty dethroned, and Majesty destroyed, but Desolation and Wo, with the

whole retinue of Miseries fell upon us; Inſomuch, we no ſooner ſat down to Meat, but we expected the intrusion of Armed Guests; how often were men dragg'd from their Beds to the Priſon, and from thence to an untimely and violent Death? And as it ſared with the State, ſo alſo with the Church? How did their little Diſputes and Diviſions hinder the building of *Jeruſalem*? They contended ſo long about the Windows, they had almoſt loſt the foundation for *Sion*, how did a pretence of inward Sanctity in ſome, devour their outward Decency! Pretending the Glory of God by ſuch means as you would think your ſelves Villified and affronted! How was Charity baniſh'd to fetch home Truth, and a Coal from the Altar to ſet the Temple it ſelf on Fire? When men pretended to be Enlightned by the Spirit, yet lived after the Luſts of the Fleſh? Were not thouſands made naked to keep the Surplice off from a few mens backs? How were the Churches defaced for the little Piques men conceited at the Windows, every minuit difference made a quarrel, and did not Diſputes raiſed about a Pin or Nail of the Temple, ſhake and endanger the whole Fa-
brick thereof? Men took up the Weapons of the Devil under a ſhew of the Lords Cauſe; and pretending to fight the Battles of the Lord, they entred a Solemn *League and Covenant*, and Swore *Allegiance* to the Prince of Darkneſs! How was Chriſtian Religion at once violated and defamed? Not only by violating her Precepts, but by falſly aſperſing her, to own, and countenance ſuch vitious practices: Theſe with many more Miseries did our Nation groan under ſo ſoon as we had committed that horrid crime of Regicide; and what could we expect leſs! *Shall Zimri have Peace, who ſlew his Maſter*? The King is Gods Vicegerent and Re-
preſentative on Earth, and therefore every Contempt of him is no leſs an affront to God himſelf? We read in the 2 *Sam.* 21. 1. That when the Land of *Iſrael* was ſmitten three
years

years together with Famine, the Oracle of God declared, *That it was for Saul and his bloody house, because he slew the Gibeonites.* Now, I pray tell me, was not our National sin, far greater than that of *Israel's*! There, it is true, the King slew the slaves, but here the slaves slew the King; there one of the worst of Kings, contrary to a National Oath slew the basest of the People; but here the basest of the People, contrary to many Oaths of Allegiance and Supremacy, Protestations and Covenants, slew the best of Kings?

And will not God visit for these things? Will our sins be less importunate for Vengeance than that of the *Israelites*? Shall the *Gibeonites* Blood cry unto God from the ground, and will not the Blood of this days Martyr cry under the Altar? *How long, O Lord, how long before thou avengest my Blood!* Yes verily, and I am afraid, that besides these many Plagues and Mischiefs we have groaned under, there be severer Vengeance hanging over us, his hand will be stretched out still, unless we prevent it by a serious Confession, and a sincere Repentance of our Sins; when we were in the dregs of Misery, and lying under the bitterness of Death, Heaven smiled upon us, and the great and all-seeing Eye gave us a taste of his Mercies, by Restoring unto us our Dread Sovereign; But examine your Consciences, and enquire of your Hearts, what Gratitude you express for this Mercy? What returns have we made for so astonishing a Blessing? We entertain'd the Change with a Joy too profuse, but was it enough Religious? We saw the great things were done for us, whereof we were glad, but did we so much consider, the Lord had done them, and were we not more affected with the variety and profitableness, than with the Mercy and kindness of the Dispensation? Have we seriously humbled our selves before God for this days Wickedness? Have we Repented of it, have we dispatched our
Tears.

Tears and Sighs as Embassadors from Heaven to plead in our behalf, and to Sue out our Pardon? That you and I, and all of us are Guilty of the Sin, is sufficiently notorious, though after divers manners and circumstances; as then the Distemper is Epidemical, so let our Sorrow be Universal; let us unanimously cry unto God, that he wou'd forgive us not only this, but all the sins we have since committed, for God hath applyed the Sun-shine of his Mercies to melt us into Repentance, as well as the Thunder of his Judgments to ruffle us into Obedience; but let us seriously reflect, if the Oyl of his Mercy hath not made us rather wanton and nimble in Feasts of Impiety, than Active in his Service? And as we have abused his Favours, so neither hath his Judgements instructed us to learn Righteousness.

O cursed Impenitency for this days Murther! I fear it is Thou that hast undone us, I fear it is Thou that still causest us to lye under the Rod of Gods Anger; how hast thou laboured our ruine, and still study our Destruction? Look down from Heaven, and speak, O Royal *Charles*; was it not for thy Blood that God hath vex'd us with Plagues, and beaten us in pieces like a Potters Vessel? Was it not thy Blood which caus'd the Destroying Angel to fill our Air with such an horrid Infection, that in less than nine Months above an Hundred Thousand Inhabitants were cut off from one City?

Speak, O Royal *Charles*, Was it not thy Blood which brought the most flourishing and famous City in the World to Ruine and Desolation, overthrowing it, as *Sodom* and *Gomorrha* were overthrown; and have we yet made an Attonement to thy Hearse? Are we not still insensible of our Wickedness? Have we watered our Couch with Tears for this our Disloyalty? Have we pay'd double Honour unto the Son for the great Dishonour done unto the Father? 'Tis true we have Sanctified a Fast, and called a Solemn Assembly;

Assembly ; but have we Fasted from our Sins ? Is there not as much Rebellion in our Hearts, as before we exprest in our Actions ? Are we not dayly Contriving and Plotting the Subversion of our Government ? How do we make our selves a Prey to our Adversaries by the Divisions amongst us ; by our Heading of Factions, and Espousing little Parties and Interests ? Do we not dayly Speak Evil of Dignities, and Despise Principalities and Powers ? Though, God himself hath said, *Who shall say unto a King, what dost thou ?* And thou shalt not Speak Evil of the Ruler of thy People ; do we not condemn his Laws, and refuse the Dictates of his Precepts, and will not the Noise of Blood pull Vengeance upon our Heads, if we prove no better Penitents. Yes verily, and I am afraid the Calamitous Distractions which at this day Infect our Nation, proceedeth from our little respect to this days Solemnity : Many, instead of Fasting and Praying, are Hectoring and Ranting ; and if this be the Religion of Saints, tell me, O good God ! what is the Impiety of Devils ? Is it Comely thus to Mourn in Coloured Taffaty ? Will such a wrestling with God force him to a Blessing, or rather will it not provoke Fire and Brimstone from Heaven, utterly to undoe us ? *I will up, I will up,* saith the Lord, *and ease my self of my Adversaries, making my Sword like that of Saul, or Gideon, loaden with the Blood of the slain, and Fat of the mighty :* Yet still as if God only spoke big Words, and all his Threats were meer Bravadoes of Heaven, we slight and condemn both his Golden Scepter and Iron Rod.

Alas ! was ever People so Prodigiously besotted, as to think, God will be thus infinitely provoked ? Let us begin then now to fear our God, and to pay all Honour and respect to the Defender of his Faith ; are you not acquainted that our Nation is almost ruin'd and destroyed ; doth not Church and State lye a Bleeding ? are not your Estates wasted ?
and

and your Trading decay'd? Your Splendor Eclipsed? Your Families broken and scattered; yea, and your Dignities trampled on: Is it not high time then that we fall on our knees, and beg of God that the Blood of his Son, may cleanse us from that of our Sovereign? Turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die? If we seek unto God by Repentance, he will repent of the Evil he intended to inflict upon us: Oh! blessed Repentance, it is Thou alone that canst save us! It was Thou alone, O Repentance, that saved Eight Persons from the Flood. *Nineveh* had fallen, had not you supported it, it had fallen, had not you protected it; it was the want of Thee that caused the Destruction of *Egypt*: If Thou hadst been present, *Sodom* had not been destroyed: Come thou then to our succour, O potent Repentance, help us, O help us! Thou Joy of Angels and Crown of Nations, stand up in defence of a no longer Rebellious, but Penitent People; let a poor Bleeding Church, let a poor Perishing Nation take shelter under thy Wings: Turn in unto us O Repentance, and be Thou visible in this Nation, who art only able to repair the mischiefs thereof: Make us perfect *Ninevites*, that the cry of Blood may not be laid to our Charge; give us from henceforth Loyally affected Hearts, that we may be subject not only for Wrath, but for Conscience sake; Cloath us with Sack-cloath, that we may not be stript of our Gorgeous Apparel; Sprinkle us with Ashes that the Smell of Fire may be no longer in our Dwellings; Enjoyn us to Fast for *Saul* and for *Jonathan*, that we may live in Peace, and enjoy the Fruits of our Labour in all Godliness and Honesty; make us to Cry mightily, that no other Cry may be heard in our Streets than those of Devotion; for Blessed are the People that are in such a Case; yea, Blessed are the People who have the Lord for their God. For then shall Peace be within our Walls, and Plentifulness within our Pallaces, then shall there be no complaining nor leading into Captivity in our Streets. Oh!

Oh! the Happiness we might enjoy if we were thus industrious for our own good ; and if not now, when shall we be Happy ? When we live under so Gracious a Prince, that for Virtue and Piety he is Second to none but *Charles* the First, but none but *Apelles* can draw *Alexander's* Picture. I shall conclude therefore, Humbly beseeching God to grant Him a long and Prosperous Reign over us, to Confound the subtile Conspiracies of His Enemies, and that as he hath express'd His Grace and Clemency to us, so may we blot out the Infamy of this Day, by plentiful returns of our Sincere Loyalty and Affection to Him ; and let all Loyal and Well Affected Subjects say, from the bottom of their Hearts,

God Save King Charles the Second, Amen.

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SERMON

PREACHED AT

St. Michael à Plea April 21st. 1684.
at the General Assembly of the
Clergy, held there by the Arch-
Deacon of *Norwich*, &c.

Luke 19th. v. 46th.

*It is written, my House is the House of Prayer, but
ye have made it a Den of Theeves.*

THe most convenient Place for Judgement, to be-
gin at the House of God; for there is no danger
of miscarriages in the Commonwealth, when
there is a concurrence of all things to promote
the Beauty and Glory of the Temple: For wherein consists
the Glory of a Kingdom? But in the due Execution of Ju-
stice: And what is it that Maintains the Queen upon her
Throne? But the Power of Religion.

When Religion then begins to faulter, no marvail if Justice begins to swerve; and what can that presage, but he eminent peril and downfal of a State?

To prevent therefore the ruines and devastations of both, God hath intrusted the Royal Office with an Absolute Supreme Power, and deposited the Court-Rolls of Heaven into his Hands: For the same Divine Providence that Anoints Him King, Proclaims Him also *Defender of the Faith*, and great Nursing Father of the Church.

Thus *Solomon* built the Temple of the Lord and his own Pallace both together, but he first Perfected the goodly Fabrick of the former, before he began to Erect the latter, to hint to us that it is the Temple which fastens the Royal Diadem upon the Princes Brows.

Though we urge not therefore the great Aid and Assistance to the Crown by those weapons of the Church, *Præces & lacrimæ*. Yet Heaven hath so provided, that *Cæsar* is as much obliged out of kindness to Himself, (as a Religious respect to promote the Splendour of Religion;) to take special regard that the House of Prayer be not converted into a den of Theeves.

For he who will abuse the House of God, will even dare to Affront Majesty to His Face.

If *Aaron* be disturbed in his Office, how can *Moses* be secure in his Throne, or how can *Aaron* be a Co-adjutor and Prophet unto *Moses*, if he be not a Shield and Defence unto his Brother? The Interest of the *Crown* and *Miter*, *Scepter* and *Crosier* is mutually to assist each other; for, like Twins, they thrive and fade, live and die together: And as the Prosperity of a Kingdom, depend on the flourishing of Religion; so likewise Religion must use the Rules of Discipline to make it more vigorous and Powerful.

The Primitive Fathers, as well as those of a younger birth, imploied all their Industry and Care for the main-
tainance

tainance of it. 'Tis all one, like the *Edomite*, to race and demolish the Church, as with Separatists to inveigh against the Discipline thereof. The Apostolical Cannons largely evince the Pains and Industry the Apostles used to maintain its Honour and Glory; they therefore Decreed that Episcopal Assemblies should be held twice every year; which Constitutions were afterwards re-inforced by the Decrees of several Councils: For what was more Powerful to preserve Sanctity, maintain Purity of Doctrine, hinder *Hereſie* and *Schiſm*, and to encourage the Dispencers of Gods Word, to contend earnestly for the Faith once delivered to the Saints?

'Tis therefore a Duty incumbent on the Bishop, to provide that Discipline be preserved in the Church, and to Actuate those Laws, which otherwise would die Abortive. They therefore who declaim against *Hierarchy* of Bishops, strike at the very ground and Foundation of the Church. For let us but remove Prelacy, and tell me where shall we find Discipline; and that being gone, what will become of Religion? When Anarchy reigned in *Israel*, then every man did what seemed good in his own eyes; and where there is no Prelate, are there not diversity of Doctrines, variety of Judgements, and every man professing what Religion he pleaseth? But seeing there are Bishops in our Church, if there be not a Religious and Orthodox Clergy, where lyes the fault but in the Prelate; and if there be not a Devout and Conformable People, where lyes the Fault but in the Priest? For where they are strict and careful in performing the Duties incumbent on them, the People would or must of necessity do theirs?

It was upon this account, therefore the Blessed Jesus in this Chapter, *When he saw the City he wept of over it; but being come into the Temple, he cast out them who Sold therein.*

In all his time of Converse with mankind on Earth, he never executed the Office of a Magistrate till now ; and indeed, what place more fit for Reformation to begin in ? Were all Erronious, *Whiggish* and half-Conforming persons weeded out of all Ecclesiastical Courts and Imployments, we should soon find *Religion* would have a greater Influence on the Conformity and Lives of Men. May we not well presume *Jerusalem* to be out of Course, and Order, when there were such great Disorders in the House of God ? When Theeves and Robbers had taken the House of God in Possession, and Sacrilege installed in the House of Prayer ? Here then our Saviour begins, passing by the Sins and Divisions of the City, *only weeping over it*, and pittying it ; but punishing the sins of the Temple, for he Whipped and Scourged them who had Prophan'd it ; saying, *My House shall be called the House of Prayer*. The words present to us the Institution, and Prophanation of the Church of God, *My House, &c*, The Institution will entertain your Meditations with three Particulars. *What it must be, For whom, And for what end.*

We resume the First, *It must be a House.*

First, Though the Earth is the Lords, and the Fulness thereof : Though God be the Supreme Governour of all the World, and cannot be circumscribed, but replenish every Corner and part thereof with his Presence ; yet still he hath ever confined himself to some one particular place, set apart for his Adoration and Worship.

Though as St. *Paul* speaketh, *Men ought to Pray continually, and in every place* : Nevertheless in all Ages of the World, God hath appointed some more peculiar Place for his Royal Court, and Residence on Earth, where Men shall offer Sacrifices of Prayer, and Praises to him.

Thus

Thus when Religion was but in its Infancy, God was resorted to in a remote Mountain, or some neighbouring Grove, where being absent from the noises of the World, men might elevate their Souls in the most pleasant Contemplations of Eternity ; where they may be freed from all Avocations , having no incumbrances to Indispose their Minds from setting their Affections on things above.

It was in this Melancholly Solitude and Holy Retirement from the World that *Abraham*, Solicited God by Invocation. *Gen. 21. 33.*

But when Religion began to flourish, these Groves being abused by Gentile Superstition, God removed himself into a Tabernacle, and journey'd along with *Moses* and the Children of *Israel*, and would not be publicly spoke with-all until *Solomon's* time. When these Pilgrims had compleated their Travels, God no longer dwelt in a Tabernacle or Travelling Temple, but had an House Erected, that He and the Ark of his Strength might enter therein ; and *Solomon* was the first who built this House where Men should make their Addresses to the Throne of Grace.

Nor ever read I any denying him a place to rest in, till there started up a late Generation of men, who would make God but their In-mate, and out of Civil Courtesie grant him a Lodging, like the poor *Levite* in *Micha's* House, or the man of God in the *Shunamites* little Chamber. But Sirs, God commands me to declare, That he who provides us an House to secure us against the ruggedness of the Air, and fierceness of Beasts, will have an House Dedicated to himself, that he may dwell therein ; yea, and Blessed be God we have found out an Habitation for the Lord of Hosts, But Thanks to the Devotion of our Fore-fathers. For we are more ready to pull down than to build ; and if so, how great is our backwardness to Beautify and Adorn ; good Works are even Antiquated ; and that Religion adjudged most acceptable

ceptable to God, which is the least chargable to man 'Tis strange men should be so basely niggardly in promoting the Glory of God? Either there must be less Religion in the World, or not the same Obligation; the last is impossible, for the Glory of God which prompted our Fore-fathers, hath the same force and Argument upon us; it must therefore proceed from our low esteem of an Omnipotent Being, that we imagine a Granary or Stable, or some Spiritual *Weavers* Parlour, spacious enough to entertain the King of Glory, and all his retinue of Celestial Courtiers.

We are censured Superstitious, if we be not direct Antipodes to the Pious Sense of former Ages: We are presently concluded devoted to the See of *Rome*, if we be but so Curious as to make Gods House Handsomer than our own; But if this be Superstition, I wish from the bottom of my Soul, all men were thus Superstitious, and zealous of good Works; If this be Superstition, how had it over-spread and corrupted Primitive Christianity? For they thought no Service so acceptable, as to do something for Gods House? For what is more plain, men have but small respect for Religion, who adorn their Houses with Marble and Ivory, Cedar and Tapestry, and see Gods House lie unprovided for, and neglected? Whatever men think, the Royal Prophet I am sure was of another Judgement and Perswasion: *For* (saith he to *Nathan*) *see now I dwell in a House of Cedar, but the Ark of God resteth within Curtains.* He thought it great Ir-religion and Impiety, that even the Kings Pallace should be more Glorious than Gods House: This was the primary reason Antiquity Christened their Churches by the Name of *Basilicae*, not because they there Sacrificed to the King of Heaven and Earth, but because of their Beauty and Frame. How Magnificent and Noble was the Temple which *Constantine* Erected; and yet how far surpassed, by that vast one *Constantius* his Son built at *Alexandria*? He succeeded

succeeded his Father, not only in possessing the same Religion, but also in his great Care and Reverence for the House of God : For they two are inseparable Companions ; he can't have any high regard for Religion, who dis-regarded the House of the Lord ; let that fall, and Religion cannot stand ; let that decay, and will not Religion perish ? He who hath any respect for his Master, can't patiently behold his House surmounted by an Hospital, or Almes-House, for Beauty and Ornament ? Can my Devotions be Elevated and Pure, when I see the place where he dwels, more like a *Bridewel*, or Pest-house, than the Pallace of my God ? Can we conceive it the presence-Chamber of Heaven, where God and his whole train of Blessed Spirits are more immediately present to hear and observe us when we see it more like a Stye, or a Stable, rather than the Mansion of so Glorious a Being ; And this I fear, is no small occasion, men demean themselves so unhandsomly and rudely therein, because an ordinary Cottage out-vies it in Spruceness, and Neatness. But indeed the most Graceful Ornament of an House, is the Peace and Unity therein ; And for this Cause, I presume the Church is not stiled *Curia*, but *Domus* ; not a Coust where Divisions and Envy are nourished, but an House where Righteousness and Truth meet together, and Love and Peace even Kiss each other. 'Tis no easie Province to maintain perfect Unity in a State, but is it so laborious to preserve it in an House ? The Disturbances and Commotions of a Kingdom, may prove Dangerous, and Fatal, but are not the Divisions of an House far more opprobrious and shameful ? When men are not of one mind in an House, but the Father opposing the Son, and the Son studious to controll the Father. The Church ought to be an House in respect of the Unity and Order maintained therein, but not an House divided against it self, where the Pastor is against the People, and the People endeavouring

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to oppose the Shepherd, and both joyn hand in hand to oppose their Bishop and Ordinary. They who consented to the perswasion of *Pythagoras*, were of opinion, that there was but one God, and two Devils, because he first separated from Unity. I shall not trouble my self with the Arguments they alledged to prove their Assertion, but I am verily perswaded, the Devil was the first *Whigg*, (in its proper sense,) Who not only by his saucy Affectation of a Parity with God, caused a Division and Tumult in Heaven; but also, he still hath his Agents and Factors to create the like differences upon Earth; he can't, it's true, now stain the Glories of unblemish'd Saints, or set Heaven it self at odds: Yet alas! How Prosperous is he, in fomenting Enmities, Animosities and Divisions upon Earth: Was it not the Devil, who caused the *Schism* of *Corah*, *Dathan* and *Abiram*? Did not he breed the separation of the *Enstasians*, who occasioned the Council at *Gangra*? Was it not he, who Enkindled that *Schismatical* Fire of the *Donatists*? Did not he blow it into such dismall and raging Flames, that they had almost consumed and burnt the whole Church? Yea, even turn'd it into Ashes? Had not that Council at *Africa* been Assembled to quench and allay its fury; And tell me, I beseech you, are not these Embers reviv'd afresh? If we reflect on those, who at this day disturb our *Jerusalem*, are they not of the same dye and Complexion (herein only differing) that those of this Age have scrap'd the shreds of all old and out-worn *Heresies* to patch them up in a *Scotch* Tump, or *Geneva* Frock; but God grant, all the *Tantivy-men* (as they maliciously call us) and Obedient Sons of the Church, may unanimously concur to whip and scourge out all them, who foment and cherish the Divisions of Church or State; that the House of Prayer may no longer be a Den, but an House, and that for God too, which is the next particular.

Secondly,

Secondly, My House, and upon this account it was stiled *Kueiaxov* in the Council at *Laodicea*, where they Condemned even the Feasts of Charity celebrated therein; for though they were good convincing Arguments of Christian Unity and Love; and held the Authority of Apostolical Custom, yet still it was thought great Prophanation of the Temple, because it was *Kueiaxov*, proper only to God, and not to be imployed to uses of our own. God gives us a right and propriety to all others, but this is Gods House, and we may not make bold with it? For as it hath a special Holiness, so in like manner, a special Honour pertaining thereunto: We don't, it is true, consider it as Holy in respect of it self, yet is it not Holy by reason of its use, and special dedication unto God? And if so, how Erroneous are they, who dispute against it, and maintain any other place as much his, and as much Holy? Which, if true, to what end is that strict Command, *Make not my Fathers House an House of Merchandise*? Or how could our Saviour lay Sacrilege to the *Jews* charge, because they Traded and Traficked there?

What more evident, than that the Churches are to be used only for the Services of God? And that ought to be the principle, yea only end of our coming thither, and not to dispatch Worldly concerns, to make Compacts and Bargains, as too frequent amongst us.

The Consecration and Dedication of Churches is no new nor unheard of thing, no nor yet Superstitious; they who censure it so, cast dirt upon all Holy Antiquity: Ah! of Holy Antiquity, said I; in the very face of God himself, who hath ever Honoured and Accepted it.

'Tis the Consecration thereof, makes it Holy; yea, and causeth God so to judge of it: For though Stone and Morter are incapable of Grace; yet by their Consecration, they receive a Spiritual Power, whereby they are made fit

for Gods Worship and Service. Now being Consecrated, tell me, O tell me the danger of Attributing Holiness thereto? I am confident there is none, if we will not run contrary in Opinion to the whole stream and current of the Ancient Fathers, who declared it as their Judgment? Whence, O whence, comes that rude and unhandsom Behaviour in the Church (that he must have a piercing judgment indeed who can discern a difference between the Temple and the Theatre) but from that *Heretical* Opinion condemned in the *Messalian Hereticks*, that there is no more Holiness in the one than in the other? Does not the Profane Usage proceed from the Profane Opinion thereof? And he that conceived thus, what can he be stiled less than *Atheist* or *Heretick*? For let us have but an Honourable Opinion of God, and from the Hem of such a Garment will flow a Virtuous and Honourable Opinion of his House: Let us but Honour him, and I declare it impossible to have no Veneration or Reverence for the Temple.

Let others stile it Superstitious, but O my Soul come not thou into their Secrets, but mount up thy self, and imitate the Devotions of Primitive *Christians*, who Worshipped God toward the *East*, both *Priest* and People as soon as they presented themselves in his House: All the time they were there, with what Modesty and Silence, with what Reverence and Attention did they demean themselves? That it justly merited the Praise of the House of God, and they of a Choire of Angels rather than Men: Were they not all upon their Knees at the Prayers? All upon their Feet at the Sermon; none presuming to Sit, as being too bold and laisy a Posture in the House of God? Nay, were there not some, who, *Andipedes incedebant in Templum*. In imitation of *Moses* they would not have their Shooes on their Feet in the Temple. May not this shame; yea, God grant it rise not up in Judgment against them who Snort a Sleep in his House,

House, as if they had not a Cabin to rest in? Who have their Hatts on their Heads, when God and his Angels more immediately behold them? And what O ye Watchmen of *Israel*, and Prophets of the Lord, shall we see our Master thus Dishonoured ~~in~~ his House, and shall we wink at the Abuses? Let us not be so faint-hearted and tame, as if we were afraid to Speak; but let us labour to maintain the Glory of his House? Ought there to be no difference between the Temple of the Lord and an House accustomed to Revelling? Shall a common Meeting-place in the Market, and that of Angels and Arch-Angels be one and the same? Of Angels said I? yea, the very Presence Chamber of the King of Heaven.

This is a Duty especially incumbent on the *Priest* to Correct such Abuses and miscarriages in the Church; that it may not be a Den, but ever continue an House of Prayer.

Which is the next Particular.

Thirdly, Though there be many Religious Duties to be exercised in the House of God, yet Prayer is the principal; yea, no other is mentioned. Gods House is the House of Prayer, not of Preaching; not that Preaching is excluded, but Prayer must have the preheminance and upper-hand. Preaching and Prayer are both good, but of the two the latter is the most worthy; 'tis pity two such fair Sisters should vie Beauty; but indeed God hath commanded me to declare that Prayer must have the most eminent, nay only place, *My House is the House of Prayer*. This was the Apostles judgement, when there was the highest necessity for Preaching, for then the Gospel was to be planted in all the World; nevertheless though it was then most useful, yet Prayer was preferred before it, for say the Apostles, *But we will give our selves continually unto Prayer, and to the Ministry of the Word*, Acts 6.4. First Prayer, then the Ministry

Ministry of the Word; now if it was so in their days, the Argument is more forcible in ours, because the Gospel is propagated, and Christianity fully settled among us; God forbid that I should in the least derogate from that Honourable Imployment of Preaching the Word, yet I am more then convinced we must more strictly account for the neglect of Prayer than of Preaching: Yet alas! we think we may be remiss in our Duty of coming to Church, if our Ears be not first alarm'd with the loud noises of a Sermon Bell, as if Religion consisted in this only, and went no higher than *aurium Tenuis*.

To what end serves Preaching, and all Learned Discourses, but as Instruments and means to instruct us to Pray; Thus you may hear St. Paul, *How shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him, of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a Preacher?* So that Preaching is the means to direct us to call upon him: And I pray tell me, if the means ought to be magnified beyond the end?

The Fathers, 'tis true, were very frequent in such Pious Orations, but this did not make Prayer more compendious; for in the days of *Chrysostom*, when Preaching was most used, there was no part of the *Liturgy* omitted, but now Prayer is slenderly respected; we seem desirous of nothing but Preaching. Many mens dislike to that incomparable *Common Prayer* practiced in the Church, Pardon me Gentlemen if I impute it to those of our Function; for how can we presume the Laity to have Reverence for it, when we our selves seem to disown it, by cutting it into little shreds and parts, either to oblige a Faction, or ease our selves; But did we all unanimously agree to be obedient to our *Rubrick*, as our Oath requires us, men would soon have a greater respect for It and Us; for what can create greater Distractions in the minds of men, whilst they observe me exactly conformable

formable to the Rules of the Church, and another little or nothing regarding it, for the same Obligation commands it from him, which enjoyns it as my Duty. The *Roman Devotionals* ('tis true) retain a great part of our *Liturgy*, and do they not also the same Bible, Sacraments, and other Holy Duties, and shall I deny that which is good, because it hath sometimes been mixed with Evil? The Vessels of the Temple were carried to *Babylon*, and Prophaned by *Belshazzar*, yet were they not restored, and Consecrated by *Ezra* to the Service of God? The *Common Prayer-Book* in like manner was most collected from the *Roman Mass Book*, but what of this? There were *Liturgies* extant in the Church before the *Mass* had Name, or Being; and *Rome Christian*, was much Elder than that of *Papal*: When therefore the Mystery of Iniquity began to play its Cards, the Old or First *Common Prayer* was not Abolished, only mixed with Errors and Corruptions; which blemishes being taken away, is it not as Beautiful as ever? This then was the Pious Care of our first Reformers to refine it from its Dross, and bring it to its Primitive Purity, retaining nothing but what is pure Scripture, or deducted therefrom by the Judgment of our Holy Mother the Church. But alas! we so much degenerate from their Worthyness, that we will not follow the form prescribed by them; we are for new Lights and Inventions to guide us to Heaven, we deny *Common Prayer*, and magnifie the sudden Raptures of men, as the Illuminations of the Spirit; when really what are they better, than an heap of Non-sense in Crampt words, only glazed with the Saint-like Varnishes of a cast up Eye, and Canting Tone.

Their chief Objections against the *Liturgy*, are because it is a Form, and enforced by Authority, which are so ridiculous, they are not worthy Confutation: For what Prayers I pray best adorn the Beauty of Holiness, those which are
 shuffled

shuffled together by Chance, or such as be Refined and Polished, who Pray most Believingly, he who digesteth what he Prays for? or he who utters his first Sense and Thoughts? Who Prays with fullest assurance to have his Prayers heard and Crown'd with Success? He who weighs and ponders his Petitions? Or he who either by implicate Devotion gives assent to all that proceed from the mouth of a Gifted Brother, or else suspend his *Amen*, when he hears things inconsistent with his reason, or rule of Faith? So that it cannot be because it is a Form, but because commanded by Authority; yet that very command layes the highest Obligation for our Obedience thereto, *Obedience (says Samuel) is better than Sacrifice.* The *Levitical* Law Commanded, *That the Firstlings of an Ass should be redeemed with a Lamb:* Now, shall we in contempt of this Law, break the Lambs neck, and think an Ass a more proper Offering for the Temple?

Return then O *Shunamite*, return, return into the Embraces of thy Holy Mother the Church, for she is all Fair, there is no Spot in her; she looked forth as the Morning, Fair as the Moon, Cleer as the Sun, and Terrible as an Army with Banners. The Prophanation of the Church, *We have made it, &c.*

That which was before praised the Perfection of Beauty, the Joy of the whole Earth; whether the Tribes ascended, as to the Patern of Heaven: When Christ came to visit it, it was neither like Heaven nor an House, the very Sacrifices therein had need of an Expiation; the Sanctuary it self could not be safe from Sacrilegious Cruelty, God and Prayer were both driven out by Theeves. The Temple was not barely Prophaned, but Prophaned in the most hainous nature; the greatness of the Offence, may be measured by the harshness of the Term, in that he calls not an House, but a Den, *We have made, &c.*

Where

Where I shall consider, *When the Church is made a Den :*
And then secondly, *Who are the Theeves.*

First, An House, receive the first peeping forth of Light, all little Rayes and Glimmering will peirce themselves in : But as for a Den, it is a place of Horroure and Darknes ; and the Church may well be compared to it, if there be wanting in it, the Light of Ceremonies, the Light of Doctrine, and the Light of Life and Conversation in the Priest.

For First, If the Light of Ceremonies be taken out of the Church, we blow out the Light that is shining therein ; is not Sense the guide to the Under-
standing ! Do not Visible things direct us to those that are Invisible ? Can an Internal Worship be manifested better than by an External Deportment ? All Nations, not only *Jews* but *Gentiles*, had Rites in the Adorations of their supposed Deities. All meeting in this, as a Principle of Nature, that Divine Worship cannot be rightly Celebrated without some Outward Solemnity. Rom. 1. 20.

Did not God command the use of Ceremonies unto the *Jews* ? Now the Moral and Ceremonial Law were not promulgated at different times, but both together, *And those whom God hath joyned, let no man put asunder.* Will it not cause a Dis-respect to hear the Service of God hudl'd over, as a Scrivener reads a Bond or an Indenture : Are we so great Enemies to Innocency, that a Surplice should fright us from attending the Ordinances of God ? That the Priest should λευκεροειν, was so general a practice in all Ages of the Church, that none did Officiate in Holy Offices, but he was clad in Raiment White as Snow.

They are not the Embroideries of Religion I so admire, as to have its Garment too heavy and weighty, nor such a
F plainness,

as to abhor all Decency and Comeliness; For let us suppose the worst, that there are some Spots which may be spared, cou'd they be handsomely taken out; yet what? Because of this must I rend my Garment in pieces and be naked? Or shall I suffer rude Hands to cut and tear it in pieces, as they please, to the great injury and Perturbation of the Church, *Ceremoniae tanquam Cerer*, They are as Lights which give Lustre and Brightness to Gods House, and the Services performed there; and one way to make it a Den, is to extinguish this Light, that it may not give Light to them entering the House of Prayer.

Secondly, As the Church can't but be dark without Ceremonies, so if the Life of Doctrine requir'd in the Priest, be not a Lamp unto our Feet, and Light unto our Paths, to guide us into the wayes of Peace.

The Blessed Jesus himself hath stiled the Preachers of the Word, not only *the Lights of the World*, but also, *the Salt of the Earth*, *a City set upon a Hill*; they are not only Stars, but Angels, chosen Vessels, men of a thousand; their Feet are stiled Beautiful, and they themselves the Glory of Christ; good reason then if our Lights should shine before men, for seeing we are called to this Eminent Function, having the Title of Light attributed us, we cannot think it sufficient we have Lamps unless furnished with Oyl, that our Doctrine may promote the Glory of God, and save both our own, and the Souls of them committed to our Care.

The House of Prayer may be a Den, if the Flames therein be not real, but Painted.

Thus St. Paul chargeth Timothy, *To take heed unto himself, and his Doctrine, and put them in remembrance to stir up the Gift of God.* 'Tis not enough to fill the Golden Candlestick of the Temple, unless they give Light to those that enter in; otherwise what are they more than prettily con-

contrived Antickes under a Building, who seem to groan under the oppression of that which doth support them.

'Twas our Saviours Command, *That we should always have our Loyns girt*, (that is) with the Girdle of Sincerity and Truth, or with other Expositors, by External Conformity in our Habits; we must be Pillars of Fire to guide others out of the night of Ignorance and wilderness of Error: For are not the Priests Lips to preserve Knowledge, and are not we to enquire of them what concerns our Souls, for they are the Messengers of the Lord of Hosts. I shall conclude this, only minding you of that Solemn Oath at our Installment into this Sacred Office, *That we would give Faithful diligence to Minister the Doctrine and Discipline of Christ*: For if the Lights of the Church be darkened, how great is that Darknes! And what will be the House of Prayer but a Den, &c.

Thirdly, As there must be the Light of Doctrine, so also of Conversation in the Priest; yes, and it must be Perspicuous too, that Religion and the Doctors thereof may have a good Report amongst all men of whatever Sect or Perswasion, that they may find no occasion to Revile, or Blaspheme us; Blaspheme us I say, for in doing it unto us, they do it unto Christ; we have Motives sufficient to incite us to a circumspect walking; For, waving the expresse command of our Saviour, let us consider how many Enemies we have in the World, who watch for our Halting, and are so quick-sighted, that they discern the least Lint hanging on a Black-Gown: No Cloath so subject to be discoloured, as that of ours. Men are not like that Pious Emperour, who would cover the Nakedness of his Clergy with his own Royal Robe, but joyful to embrace every little occasion to render us Contemptible.

This then should awaken us; but if this will not do, let us consider, how absurd it is to undo that on the Week-

day which we Preached on the Lords? Shall we be diligent in Instructing of others, and we our selves remain Ignorant and Foolish? Shall we speak brave flourishing words in commendation of Religion, and reclaim Rhetorically against Vice; yet make it our Trade and Practice. The *Urim* and *Thummim* were both put into *Aaron's* Breast-Plate, that he might be a Living Sermon, as well as a Preacher of Sound Doctrine.

He who wanted an Eye, Hand, Foot, or had any blemish in his Body, was forbidden by God to attend at his Altar; then much more sure polluted in Soul? They who bear the Vessels of the Lord, must be Clean: *Ye have made it a Den of Theeves*, was a great aggravation of the Churches Prophanation.

Secondly, I descend to the Theeves, or Persons defiling Gods House: The first of them, is he who crept into the Ministry without Commission; thus the Saviour of the World tells us, *He who creeps into an House by the Window, the same is a Thief and a Robber*: And if so, what can he be stiled less who thrusts himself into the Priest-hood, and not by the door of Lawful Authority? Thus to run without Commission, is an Usurpation of that which none should take upon him, but he that was called of God as was *Aaron*, by an External, as well as Internal call. The Apostles were trained up a long time before Christ sent them on that Employ; they were not sent to Preach the Word so soon as they were Enrolled into the number of his Disciples, like hasty Births with Shells upon their Heads, but they attended and waited for a full Authority and Commission: But alas! Authority is now so much slighted and trampled on, that men fancy, if they can but spare so much time from their Shops, they have Authority enough to skip into the Office of the Priest; but are they not Theeves and Robbers, who
force

force themselves into the Ministry without License, or Abilities? they pretend indeed to a large share of Spiritual Influences, which they resume will supply all other Defects, and adapt them fit Ministers of the Gospel; which if true, the House of Prayer would soon be made a Den of Theeves, for men would soon get the knack and Cunning, to pretend a Call; and then by tedious Discourses of Gods Grace, so Insinuate themselves into the Bosoms of men, that they would easily be Deluded by them; others excuse their Illiterate rudeness by the Honest, Plainness and Simplicity of the Apostles; but can they manifest such Miraculous endowments, such Power, and Anointing from above as they were furnished withall.

St. Paul in reference to this Holy Function, asked with trembling, *Who is sufficient for such Offices?* But they invert the question, and cry, who is insufficient? I leave it to your selves, is it probable that *Farriers* should turn Experienced *Physitians*; much less that they who come from sordid Mechanick Offices, can provide for mens Souls? All accomplishments of Reason, Learning and Judgement are decry'd as Carnal, and Enemies to the Cross of Christ, which makes me commend to you the Story of the *Apes* in the Fable, *Who because they had no Tails themselves, would have perswaded those who enjoyed that Ornament to cut it off as troublesome and superfluous*; your selves may make the Application, and so I pass from the first to the second sort of Theeves who trouble the House of God.

Secondly, They are those who rob God of his Titles, for it is a gross mistake to think it is unto Us; no, it is unto God, they refuse to render the things which are Gods; Thus you may hear God himself declare it, *Will a man rob God? yet ye have robbed me*; But you say wherein have we robbed Thee, in Tithes and Offerings? God takes the wrong wholly unto Himself, and the reason why he made the Heavens
Brass,

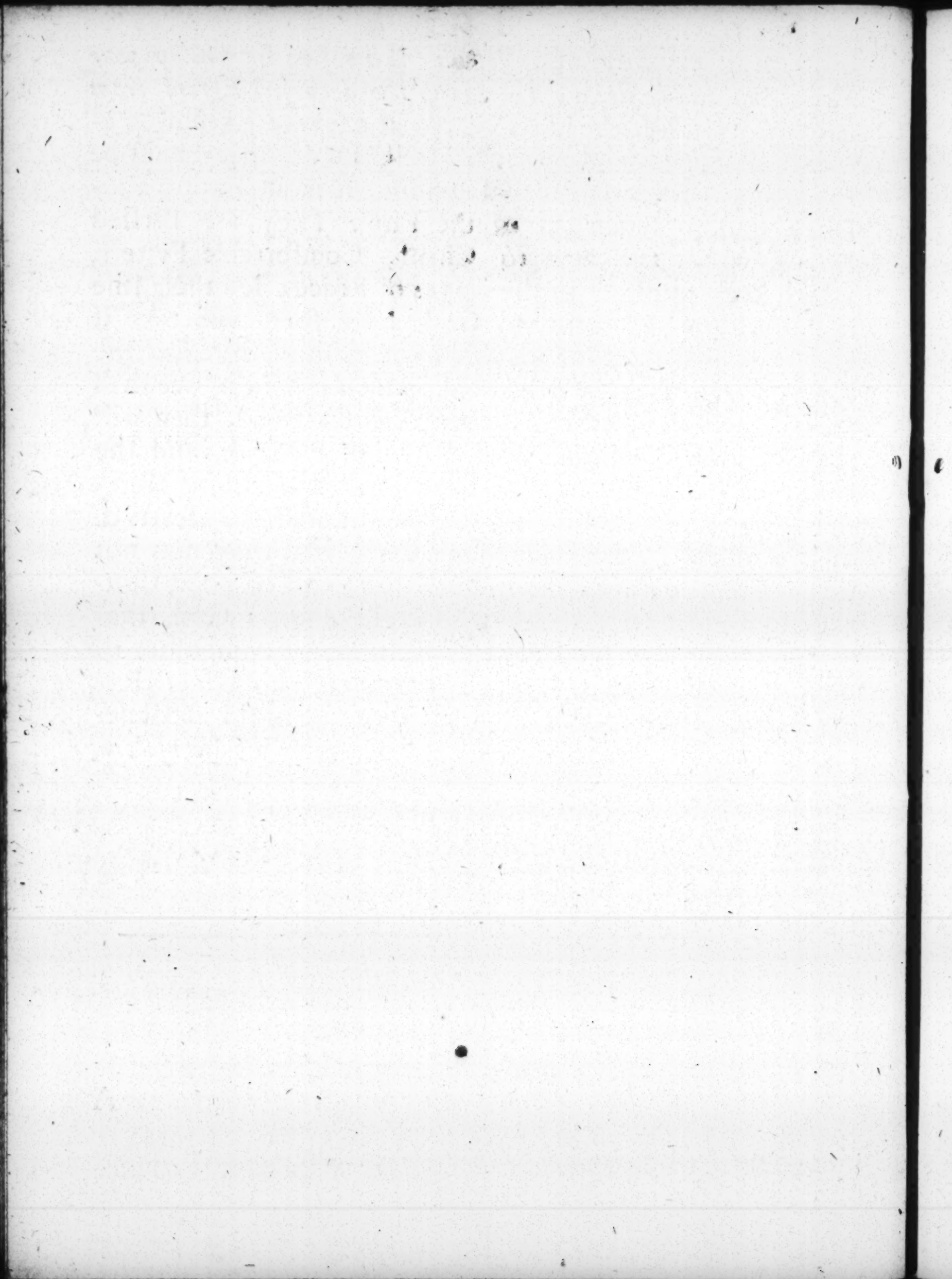
Brass, and would not suffer Rain to descend upon the Earth, was because they had given him no Tithes of the Fruits wherewith he had Blessed them.

Thirdly, But as the People rob the Priest of his Tithes, so also the Priests rob the People in not affording them Divine Service: That the Priest should reap mens Worldly things, is unquestionable; so it is also required that they should reap our Spiritual things; If therefore we either omit the reading these Prayers commanded by the Church, or shrink them into a lesser compass, we deserve no better Appellation than that of Theeves. As then, we are earnest for all our Tithes, so let us be careful that God may have all his Prayers; for he that will cut God short of them, will not fear to cut him short of any thing else whatever.

Fourthly, There are many other Theeves which very much abuse the House of Prayer; but I shall conclude all in naming the Church-wardens, and other Officers, who are the Guardians of the Church; you are persons in whom the Church repose her Confidence, that you will deal Faithfully with her in presenting all Abuses, but how you discharge your Trust passeth my understanding; for none are ignorant many things are Presentable, but nothing Presented, so that from hence especially, the Church is made a Den of Theeves; For would men dare to separate from our Solemn Assemblies, if you were not so remiss in your respective Duties? Will it not be a most piercing Wound to your Consciences at the General Audit of God, that by your omitting to execute the Laws of the Church our Holy Mother (as *Medea* did her Children) is rent into several Limbs, Bitts, and Pieces? What can be more terrible to you, then to consider, that through the neglect of You, the House of Prayer is made a Den of Theeves.

Let me then beseech all who are intrusted with the Concernments of the Church, to think they hear God speaking unto

unto them, as he did unto *Joshua*, *Wherefore lye you on your Faces, up and be doing, take away the accursed Errors from amongst you?* Let the Laws be put in a severe Execution against all *Dissenters* from the Church, for obstinacy must be Forced, not Courted by Perswasions, it is an Happy Violence that pull men out of the Fire: They are Blessed Bonds, which tye men to Christ, Comfortable Fetters, which keep our Feet in the wayes of Peace; let them stile it Persecution, Persecution, God, I am sure, will take it well at your hands, for 'tis his own method, to afflict the Body, that he may save the Soul, which if we do, we shall see God will arise, and his Enemies be scattered, then will the Glory of God be Exalted, Religion Flourish, and the House of Prayer no longer a Den, but an House at Unity in it self; which that it may, God Enlighten the Hearts of all in Authority Ecclesiastical and Civil, that they may not be negligent in their Duties, but Strong and of good Courage to Fight against them, who Fight against God, that there may be an advancement of Religion, a composure of all Christian Animosities, that Peace and Righteousness, Religion and Piety, may be Established among us for all Generations, and let all who seek the Prosperity of *Jerusalem*, say, *Amen, Amen.*



A
SERMON

PROVING A
Late, or Death-bed Repentance, no
Repentance.

Psalm xcv. V. viii.

*To day if you will hear his Voice, harden not your
Hearts —*

Self-Interest and Prudence, oblige and command us to guard and fortifie our selves, before the approaching Incurfions of our mortal and malignant Enemy; that we may the more effectually oppose, and briskly resist their forces.

He, who would not be constrained Cowardly to fly at the first Encounter of an Invading Adversary, must be ready to Assail him before he hath Entrench'd himself; least, when his Canons are placed, his Battering-pieces display'd, he meet with a more vigorous and easie Repulse: That subtile Serpent the Devil, is the Arch-enemy of all Mankind, if there-
G fore

fore we do not valiantly oppose, and courageously bid defiance to all his Temptations at the first on-set, by more lessening Circumstances he will quickly become more Victorious over us, and lead us into the strong-holds of Sin.

He then, who is earnest to avoid this Slavery and be perfectly released from such a Servitude, must in the Morning of his Age, grapple with the Old Man, and expel him out of this flesh wherein he hath so strongly Encamped himself, and whilst we have the Recruits of Vigour and Strength to reinforce us. For it is a Cessation of Arms that gives the Conquest to our Enemy, and if we do not repel him in the Spring, and Flower of our Youth, in our greenest years; Oh! the difficulty and hardness, we shall find to rally our decaying Spirits, in the Winter of our Age when Snow is on our Heads, and Frost within our Veins!

~~Now then is the accepted time, This is the day wherein~~ we must proclaim open Wars against that Inveterate Enemy of Mankind. For that Warriour of Hell watches for Opportunities to lullaby us a sleep on the downy Beds of Sloath and Security, thereby to gain those great advantages of a surprise; because he knows, if we don't cheerfully attend upon the Ordinances of God, and make a continued Progress in Holiness, we do certainly yield our selves Servants to Sin, and are ensnared by these Nets he hath privately laid to entrap men. For when God perceives I make no good use of those Talents of Grace committed to my Trust, not to my Trust as to keep them enwrapped in a Napkin, but to improve to a further growing in Grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ; which, if I don't, he then will most justly withdraw these his Graces, which I have so foolishly mis-employed; and harden my heart, as well to punish me for my Wickedness, as also for my Folly; that then, when I might have made use of his supporting Grace to assist me, I did willfully slight and neglect these opportunities

tunities of growing from Grace to Grace; *For to day if you will hear his Voice harden not your Hearts.*

In this Psalm the Sweet Singer of *Israel* insinuates an earnest Exhortation to Laud and Magnifie the Providence of God, in his Wise conduct of the World; together with that Infinite Wisdom in contriving and managing the Illustrious Fabrick and œconomy of the Church both Triumphant and Militant; and then he descends in v. 8. to exhort and admonish us not to Irritate and provoke him to Anger, by our Impenitent Course, and persisting in Wickedness; but embrace every opportunity of Obedience to his Voice, and of a perfect resignation to his Service and Pleasure; least by a contempt and hardning our Hearts, we tire and weary out the Patience of Heaven, till it punish us (as did those of *Messah* and *Meribah*) by a Solemn Protestation and Oath, *We shall not enter into the Land of Rest, or Heavenly Canaan.*

The words are naturally so pregnant, I need not urge any thing there-from, but what presents of its own accord: I shall not then enlarge my Meditations further, then to entertain you with this short Proposition.

That we must not in the least defer our Repentance, but instantly comply with Obedience to that Voice which requires it of us, *For to day if you will hear, &c.*

Solomon seriously considering the hard Province of a man to relinquish habituated Vices, advises all in his Book of *Ecclesiastes*, *To remember their Creator in the days of their youth:* For evident it is, nothing more difficult for a man, when he hath once set his Teeth on edge with the unwholsome Viands of Sin, than to relish the Savoury Meats of Righteousness.

For Sin and Pleasure leave such a Tang and Hogoe in the mouths of Carnal men, it renders so pleasant a gust to the Infirmities of Humane Nature, that a Camel may as easily rush through the Eye of a Needle, as such a person be ca-

pacitated for the Kingdom of Glory; to which sense are those excellent words of the Prophet, *Can the Æthiopian change his Skin, or the Leopard his Spots*, Then may you also do good, who are accustomed to do evil?

He therefore that defers his Repentance in the Summer of his Age, and will not acknowledge his Sins whilst he hath Strength, and Vigour, *To resist the World, the Flesh, and the Devil*, but involv'd them in the excuses and denial, and clouds of Hypocrisy. He will not find it a slender task, when all Diseases and the Evils of Age, shall muster up their forces in his Crazy-bones, when all his wasting pleasures shall present their *Items* to his Bed-ridden view to find the Comforts of Repentance then.

Many Doctors pertaining to the *Roman Conclave*, answering to the question, *At what time precisely a Sinner is obliged to Repent*, affirm, *At what time soever*; (for say they) *the Precept of Repentance is of the same nature with that of Baptism and Prayer*; Nor this day, nor to morrow, is it absolutely necessary to be Baptized, but sometime or other; and if I Pray an hour or half hence, the duty of Prayer is perform'd as fully, as if I fell upon my Knees at the very instant of the *Proclamation*. But with submission to better Judgements, I dare boldly affirm, this assertion can neither be confirm'd by Holy Writ, or any Author, who Preach nothing but the Sincere Word of God. 'Tis true, I dare not conceal it, *God desires not the Death of a Sinner, but abundantly rather, that he turn and Live*: Yet if one, who hath had the grand Blessing of Heaven to be born in the Pale of his Church, who hath the Sun-shine of the Gospel always beaming on him (whose Life engendring Rays are sufficient to warm and soften a stony Heart; yes, *And out of such stones to raise up Children unto Abraham*) if he will consume his Youth and Beauty in the Service of sin, wearing out the gloss of his Life in open Hostility against God, and Rallying his Forces

to Bandy against the Almighty, neither will he accept of his Services, when he is worn out with years, and hath nothing to present him but the thin Furrows and Wrinkles of Old Age.

I appeal to your selves, how just and reasonable it is for an Earthly Potentate, who promise me, if I will submit to his Commands, and render an entire Obedience to all his Precepts for the space of one year; at his expiration, he will load me with Honours, and burthen me with Riches; how just is it for him to refuse me those Honours, and deny me those Riches, if I walk contrary to his ways, and will not be obedient to the Dictates of his Laws? May not then the Creator of Mankind, in like manner, withdraw the Graces we have so foolishly imbezelled and misemploy'd.

For is it reasonable for me, professing Christianity to Ravel out the little moment of this Life, in Sensual Pleasures and Delights, never taking a turn in the Melancholly Shades of a Penitent Soul, to imagine God will reward my Death-bed Sorrow, as a Godly Sorrow, when I have Prodiggally spent all my Sprightly Strength, in ranging the by-ways of Sin, and compleating the Kingdom of Satan; because he who expects a consummation of future Bliss, must have his whole Life, and all his Actions free from every imputation and appearance of Evil.

The great Shepherd of our Souls loves not a Spotted or Ring streaked Flock; but our whole Lives must be an unchequered, and intire Holiness.

So soon as we have taken our Military Oath, and are Enroll'd under Christs Banner, we must begin our Warfare against the World, Flesh and the Devil; not having the most little and inconsiderable passage of our Life stain'd, or fullyed by the dishonours of a dirty and unworthy Action; I mean not, that all the circumstances of our Life, or whole retinue of our Actions can be as uncorrupted as the Rays of
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the *Sun*, or as pure as the pure Sparklings of the *White-stone*, and Heavenly *Jerusalem*; no, but yet we may in some measure resemble the *Moon*, in which *Phylosophers* acquaint us, there are certain Macule, or Spots, but no Deformities.

Whilst we are in this state of Imperfection, we can't be so Clarified, as to be free from all Indiscretions, Errors and Mistakes : Flesh and Blood are dayly attended by a numerous train of Sensual Objects, which causes us to dwell in the neighbourhood of Ungodliness; but then so soon as I am sensible of this Defilement, or that Weakness, I must wash it away in the Tears of Repentance : But if I persevere in my Wickedness, and never inquire of my Conscience what I have done, I willfully incur my own Damnation, because I am positively and directly bound for to repent so soon as I know I have offended, *For to day if you will hear his Voice, &c.*

Thus you see, if we would be Happy hereafter, we must not in the least defer our Repentance, but that is further urged by these following Reasons.

First, The first Reason is drawn from the end and intention of God, in commissioning the Dispensors of his *Word*, *To lift up their Voices like Trumpets, to declare to Jerusalem their Sins, and to Judah their Transgressions* : For wherefore is all this, if not to Alarum us into a present actual Obedience? For does God authorize those who attend at his Altar, to Thunder against our Sins, and incite us to Repent, and does he not intend we should repent on that day he calls for it? Dare the Prophets and Ministers of Righteousness, bid us repent next year? Have they any Commission will warrant them to say, It is very well and expedient to repent to day, but you incur no danger to defer it to a longer time, or more convenient season, till you are well stricken in years, and your Heads Crowned with a Silver Crown of Hoary

Hoary Hairs? If it be thus, to what end do we Preach? If this be the drift of Pulpit Discourses, wherefore are they made? Does not God require our exact Obedience? Does not he expect my Morning and Evening Sacrifices of Prayer and Thanksgiving? And can I offer this unto him, unless I seriously Repent? No certainly; so long then as I remain Impenitent, I deny my self the Honourable Title of being the Servant of God, *Today therefore, &c.*

Secondly, But then secondly, does not God every day dart some Beams of his Grace upon me? Do not he incessantly knock at the door of my heart, so long as the day of Salvation begins not to decline? Does not he send his Spirit to Invite, his Arguments to perswade, and his Mercies to Enamour me of the Beauty of Holiness? And are these things to be Play'd withall, or set light by? Is it not a Sin, once to resist the Holy Spirit, and don't I resist it, who remember I have sinned, and know it does incense my God, yet I continue so presumptuous as not to repent at the pleading guilty in my Conscience? Now is not he who resists the Grace of God, ten, twenty, or thirty years, a much more Notorious Offender, than he who opposed it twenty dayes, and so on to twenty hours, and twenty minuits? The longer God hath patiently waited for our Repentance, much more infinitely disoblig'd is he, if we don't Repent: How can I senselessly imagine his Anger would increase, if our sins were not multiplied? Besides, must not I repent of my resisting Gods Grace, of my refusing to Hear, of my none-Attendance and neglect of the means of Salvation? Must not I give diligence to make my Calling and Election sure? Must not I strive to enter in at the strait Gate? And why all these Exhortations and Incitements to Holiness, if there be no Duty to be performed? To what intent serve all the Terroures and Afrightments of Hell, if not to perswade

swade men to avoid all the dismall Horrors and Consequences thereof? Wherefore are all the Promises of Eternal Life, and Crowns of Glory, if not to encourage, as well as to reward Obedience? And what can be reckoned a Contempt of Heaven, if this be not, that when God by his Preventing, his Exciting, his Encouraging, and his Assisting Graces to invite us to Repentance. We, notwithstanding all, will not Mourn for our Sins, nor be Sorrowful for our Offences.

This is that wherewith God upbraided the Obstinacy of his People, *Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my Hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at naught all my Councils, and would have none of my Reproof; I will therefore laugh at your Calamity, and mock when your Fear cometh*, Prov. 1. 25, 26, 27. Tell me now, is not every Calling of great moment and concern, and consequently is not every slighting of it Criminal and dangerous, and does not God Call upon us daily? Let us put these things together, and then we may derive this Natural consequence, that he who Sins and does not speedily Repent, at least Sin twice; and every day we defer it, is a more compleated Provocation to urge the Lord of Hosts, to enter into the Armoury of his Wrath, and utterly consume us, to which sense are those excellent words of St. Paul,

Despiseest thou the Riches of his Goodness, and Forbearance, and long Suffering, not knowing that the Goodness of God leadeth thee to Repentance, Rom. 2. 3. That is,

Every Action of Gods Loving Kindness, and forbearing to punish our Sinful Courses, is an Argument for, and a Motive to Repentance; and our not stretching forth our Hand to lay hold on this Tree of Life, our refusing to wash in this River Jordan, our not being Reformed or made better by it, is stiled by the Apostle, *A despising his Goodness*, and every non-repentent day, a Treasuring up Wrath, against the

the day of Wrath: For, if we wilfully persist in our obdurate resisting all these methods of Divine Mercy, it will certainly add greater weight to our ruine, when God shall punish or reward according to our Actions; *To day therefore if you will hear his, &c.*

Yet Oh! the stupidity of Mankind! So dull and careless, are we to apprehend our future good and advantage, that we wax Old in Sin, and Gray in Iniquity; we judge the hours of our Life glide and vanish away too nimbly for the acting of our Sin, but comes too fast for our Repentance. In my private Meditations and close Retirements into my own Breast, I have Christianly commiserated; yea, my heart hath even bled, at a man Rightly Principled in Religion, able to Administer Sage Council to others, Discreet enough to conduct the various Intrigues of a Family, Prudently resolved concerning the Interests of this Life; entering Gods-House every *Sunday* or *Festival*, giving great Attention to the Dispensers of Gods word, the Sermons of the Gospel, and the soft murmurings of the Holy Spirit: Men who understand the woful Estate of them, who die without Absolution and Remission of their Sins, who are not insensible, that the Wrath of God, like the Punishment of *Cain*, is greater than we can bear, yet inevitably incident on all them who prevent it not by opportune Repentance.

Is it not a lamentable and doleful sight, to observe men, so well qualified for Virtue, and a Pious Life, daily Sinning against God, entering into all Temptations, and as it were,

Ornare Diabolum,

Become Learned Spoils to the Enemy of our Salvation, yet never think on Repentance, but resolves to venter for it till the last Breath, and for its acceptance too at so untimely a Season.

For, it is first a great hazard whether God will then assist me with so much Grace as to Repent; which if he do, I then

secondly, run the venture of an After-game, whether that Repentance will be acceptable by him; because without Controversy it cannot be perfected. For if Holy Writ, by a true Repentance, understand and mean an Amendment and Reformation of Life, as certainly it does: Then tell me, what difference is there, not to Repent at all, or not to begin it, till the last Thread of Life be a Spinning: For, how can I Amend, Reform, or lead a new course of Life; when alas! poor Creature that I am! I am no longer to be! *To day therefore, &c.*

Thirdly, Are not all the Leaves of the Book of Life Exhortatory Perswasions to a speedy Repentance? For where God commandeth me to Pray, there he urgeth to Repentance; because otherwise, my Prayer would be defective, and render no sweet smelling Savour in the Nostrils of God.

Nay without Repentance, I pronounce it impossible to Pray to God with that Ardour and Zeal we are obliged: For, to Pray aright, is to cast away all Affections to Sin, the least Glances to Temptations, to be Sorry we have Sinned, with a full Resolution never to be Guilty of the like Transgression, or the same Madness; and thereupon *Solomon* declar'd, *The Prayer of the Wicked is an abomination to the Lord*: Yea, consult Truth it self, and you may hear it declaring, *I hate your Burnt Offerings, my Soul loathes your Solemn Assemblies; bring me no more vain Oblations*: They are adjudged vain and loathsome, because not perfumed with the sweet Incense of Repentance. Thus you may hear the man in the Gospel declaring, *God heareth not Sinners*, John 9. 31. (that is) Those who have sinned, and have not yet repented; being unhappy in their hasty Sin, much more miserable in their slow Repentance.

An Impenitent person Soiles and Discolours every otherwise well approved Action, he Envenomes and Poisons even

even the very Mercy of God : For, if such a man Pray, what is it esteemed more, than Howling ? If he Mourn, what is it more, than hanging down the Head like a Bull-rush ? If he Sacrifice, what is it, but the cutting off a Dogs neck ? If he rejoyce, what is such mirth, *But a Blaze and Crackling of Thorns under the Pot ?* For God regards and gives ear to none but the Penitent, on which account you may observe, Christ commanding us to Pray, and instructing us what we should Pray for, enjoyns us every day, *To Pray for the remission of our Sins ;* Mat. 6. 10, 11. We can't request our daily Bread, unless we beg a daily forgiveness of our Sins. So likewise Holy *David* in the Text, and *St. Paul* from the *Psalmist* in his Epistle to the *Hebrews*, *To day if you will hear, &c.* Not only strictly commanding us, not to put off our Repentance one day, but also affirming, every such delay is an act of Obduration, and so a new sin is added to the old. So oft then as I meditate on those Melodious Words, and Charming Eloquence, of the Son of *Syrach*, *I seem'd to hear all the bright morning Stars and Sons of Glory, calling to us below, to make no tarrying to turn unto the Lord, and to put not off from day to day, for suddenly shall the wrath of the Lord come forth, and in thy security thou shalt be destroyed, and perish in the day of Vengeance,* Ecclesiasticus 5. 7.

For every day of our Life, may probably be adjudged the day of our Burial ; for what is it more than the Life of *Roses*, which in the Evening make a Tomb, of that *Scarlet* which was its morning Ornament and Glory ? What reason therefore can be more prevalent than this, to provide the best Arguments we can for our Justification before Death ; because God frequently smites Sinners in their Confidences, he strikes them in their Securities, in their Delays, they may meet with a Surprise ; in their Procrastinations, they may be frustrated of their Hopes, and Death may rob

them of the Benefits and Advantages of to morrow. For what is bold man, (as some confidently speak) to resolve not to Repent till *(Christmass, Easter, Whitsontide, next Communion, or such prefix'd Festival and Seasons* : Alas ! poor Dust and Ashes that we are ! How probable is it whilst we revolve such Thoughts in our mind, an Imposthume, Swelling in our Head or Breast, may make us big with Death ?

How probable is it, some popular Disease raging in our Streets, may slay him in three days time ? May not to morrows Dinner breed a Surfeit, or this nights Intemperance a Feaver ; How oft do we see Death riding Triumphant in our Dwellings, and Crowned with the Spoils of many numbers of Men ? Alas ! it is impossible to enumerate all the possibilities of dying Suddainly, or the Probabilities how soon our Lives may be ravel'd out to its utmost Thread : For though we flatter our selves in the Plentifullest hopes of a Gaudy Fortune, Death may meet ev'ry one of us, with a *Thou Fool, this night shall thy Soul be taken from thee*. Let any one therefore, who hath any thing besides the Shape and Lineament of a Man, but really acknowledge, that he is Mortal ; let him but confess himself to be a man, and subject to the Accidents of Mortality ; and that very Confession, must be a confutation of them who defer their Repentance. For, I appeal to your selves, Is it reasonable for me, who confess my self a Sinner, and am perswaded of a Supreme Existence, and believe, that he knows I am a Sinner, and will Infallibly punish me for my Sins, if not washed away with the Tears of Repentance ; can I be thought Rational, and in my Wits, if I defer it, unless upon the confidence of a long Life ? And grant my Supposition, should the promising my self many days promote a Life and state of Impenitency ? Is it so intolerable to live Virtuously ? Is the Yoak of Christ so uneasy ? Are the Commandments of God so Grievous ? Will to live Righteously

teously; Soberly and Godly in this present World, quite strip us of our pleasant days, and make us waste our Hours in a Morose Austerity or Sullen Gravity? Or are the hopes of Life intended for no other purpose than to delay our Sin, and defer our Repentance; God forbid, for such premises can't be guilty of a worse Conclusion. However, he that seriously meditates on those many numbers of men; who, like little Blossoms, are Cropt by the Scythe of Death in the Tenderneſs of their Age, will have but small reason to consent to these evil purposes from such weak and contingent Principles.

I cannot tell the precise Minuit of my Death, or take an exact measure of this Span of Life; and then, to defer my Repentance, is a Sham put upon my own Soul, and a contempt of all the Divine Revelations of Heaven and Hell.

Nō mēus xōw, make no League of Confederacy with time, because there is nothing more like to deceive Humane Nature, than such a fickle uncertainty; and therefore God threatned the Angel of the Church of *Ephesus*, saying, *Repent for I will come unto you qui k'y, and remove the Candlestick out of its place, unless you do Repent; that is, unless you Repent quickly, I will come quickly, and who knows how soon that may be to me Preaching, or you Hearing? Is it not therefore great Prudence, as well as Charity to our Sou's, to be Providently Industrious, that his coming to us prevent not our return to him; for which we can never enjoy good security, unless we embrace a speedy Repentance. And Oh! the mighty Influence! it would have upon our Lives, if the consideration might sink into our Hearts of those many numbers of Persons, as Good, as Wise, as Daring and Confident: Yes, and by the circumstances of Health, as likely to Live as we; yet have been snatched away, by a Death so suddain, that their very deferring their Repentance but one day, nay but one hour, may have proved their Eternal ruine.* Had

Had they but Repented the day before, it wou'd have look'd like a design of Grace, and an act of Election, and have rendred their condition Hopeful.

If we seriously weigh such considerations in our breast, we shall conclude it necessary, in the highest degree, that we make neither loitering, nor stay in our being reconciled unto God ; because one hours, nay minuits stay, may not only by a peradventure, but in a real and true event of things, prove to be one of these Sins, called the Sins against the Holy Ghost, I mean, final Impenitency.

For, as I who die young, and in the prime of my strength and vigour, am as really dead, as he who dies after an Age of 40, 50, or 60 years Travel ; so is that Impenitency final, under which I am Arrested by Death in the very birth, and infancy of my Crimes, as much as if I had laid Bed-rid in my Repentance, be snatch'd from hence to die Eternally in Hell.

The Evil is not of so black a dye, the Judgement is not of so severe a stamp, but equally as Fatal, equally as irreversible, as the Decrees and Sentences of Damnation on those who are held in Chains until the Judgement of the great day.

Moreover, may we not observe the stupid foolishness of man, to slight and neglect those best opportunities of Repenting, whilst the Marrow swells in our Bones, our Blood be hot, and boils within our Vains, when we are best capable of performing the several Duties of it, then to put it off till we grow Crazy and Infirm ; for are Dimme Eyes, Deaf Ears, Pale Visage, Decay'd Teeth, Withered Skin, Stinking Breath, Furred Pipes, Trembling Knees, Fumbling Hands, Falling Feet, a Stammering Tongue, and a Ratling Throat ; fit Qualifications and suitable Embelishments for one rendring an Account to the Impartial Judge of Heaven and Earth ? *To day therefore if you will hear his Voice, &c.*

Fourthly

Fourthly and Lastly, When a man warps from the direct path of Virtue, it is obvious and common to rebuke him; for every Sober, and Honest person is covetous and desirous, that his unhappy Friend or Acquaintance shou'd forsake his pursuit in Wickedness, and leave off his course in Impiety: We therefore require him to be sorry for his Sin, to detest and hate his Crime, resolving for the future never to be guilty of the like Enormity.

Now, I pray consider, wherefore is all this, if not upon the same account that God does it; because to persist in it, can't possibly be good, but to relinquish it, very advantageous; to dwell or tarry therein is dangerous, and a state of Evil; and to chuse to dwell there, what is it, but an Act of Love to that state, and consequently impossible to be free and void of offence? And not to Repent, when by good Admonitions I am forewarned of my danger, is a desire to abide there; and when I consider, and know that I have Sinned, and am not absolved of mine Iniquities, then does Gods Spirit, and the Principles of our Religion mind me of my danger, and threaten my Ruine, if I perversely venture my self on such dangerous Precipices; so that the Conclusion is undenyable, no man can so much as remember he hath sinned (and remain Impenitent) without an Addition, or at least a Repetition of the same Sin.

But then is not our Natural and In-bred disposition to incite others, a potent Argument, that the same obligation binding them, commands it of every one of us in our own particular?

Seeing we all pretend to flatter our selves, as capable of giving good Council, will it not stain our Wisdom, if our selves refuse to follow the Dictates of our own Sage Advices? Now then is the accepted time, this is the day of Salvation.

Thus a famous Champion of Christianity piously confirmed his Resolutions, and at last fix'd on such a present actual Obe-

Obedience; for nothing could end his questions, and compose the ruffings of his Conscience, but to interpret the Precept of Repentance in the *τὸ νῦν*, the very present juncture, and at no time else.

Differens dicebam modo, ecce modo, sine Paululum, sed modo & modo non habuerat modum.

I would Anon, and against the next Week, against the next Communion, or against the Festival, but there was no end of this; *Subficio igitur me stravi, flens, Quamdiu, quamdiu, Cras, & Cras, quare non modo, quare non hâc horâ finis Turpitudinis mei?*

I Wept, and said, how long shall I say to-morrow? How long shall I say till the next Communion? Why not now? Why should I not by an immediate Repentance put a close and period to my Crime? If not till to-morrow, or the next Festival, there is as great an Argument for every day of our Life in which we can say to-morrow.

There is enough that can determine us to day, but there is nothing that can determine us to-morrow! If it be not necessary now, it will not be convenient then, or ever likely to be expedient, so long as there be a Morrow-morning to our Life.

He therefore, who desires the welcom of a Faithful and diligent Servant, must be early at his *Work*, and begin forthwith to do the Will of his Father which is in Heaven. To which purpose, I have somewhere read one advising us to imitate the Example of the Thief upon the *Cross*. *To do as he did.*

Yes, we are easily decoyed by the Subtilty of our Enemy to do as he did; I mean defer our Repentance unto the last gasp of breath, having the great Encouragements of his happy success. Alas! no we don't follow his steps! Thrice Happy men were we! If we did resemble Him in his Repentance. For, I will dare to aver, he did not defer his Repentance

pentance until the last, for so soon as early Beams of the *Sun* of Righteousness peeped through the Curtains of his Infidelity, and shin'd in his Heart, he embraced his Saviour with the Arms of Faith, believed on him, and was really Converted; so soon as he heard of a Christ, he confess'd him a Saviour, and without the least hesitation, or delay, Repented him of his former mis-spent Actions. And if we Transcribe his Copy, we must Repent so soon as we hear Christ Preached unto us, and then our Repentance is un-reprovable, but otherwise our Damnation is unavoidable.

Why art thou so dull and drowsy then, O sinful Creature? What phrensey possesseth thee, thus to defer thy Repentance? Can this delay consist with any Christian Grace? With Faith, Hope and Charity? With Prudence or Piety? With the Love of God, or of our own Souls? Thus to withstand the shock of the Thunder, to oppose the mouth of the Canon, and dare the Omnipotents Anger? All which are the dreadful effects of an Impenitent Heart, for God hateth him, who grows fat in his Sin, and waxes Lusty in his Transgressions; And is it so idle, so indifferent a concern, to be detested by the Fountain of Love and Goodness?

When the little Son of *Alexander* saw a Company of Theeves Pilfering his Fathers House, and carrying away the Rich Vessels of Gold, and *Attick* Talents, the Child Smil'd and Whip'd his Top; But when a Boy, who accompanied the Theeves, rob'd him of his little Instrument for Sport, he could then cry out, raising the Neighbourhood, and discovering the Theeves.

Thus, and much more Childish is he, who Plays and Sports himself in the Caresses of Sin, and in the *Leterim* his Soul is stollen away by that *Goliath* of Hell, who gives us Toys and Pebbles, the more easily to Delude, and Cousen us of this our most precious Jewel. How would such a man be transported with Fury, and Rage, at the loss of his Goods? Is he not

too Jealous of his Fortunes to commend one hour to the Pidelity of Theeves? Would he venture his Body two Minuits in the reach of an Enraged Lyon? Yet, how unconcernedly! does he permit his Soul to be snatch'd away by that Roaring Lyon, who goes about seeking what Souls he may devour! He leaves it in pawn to that great Tyrant, Months and Years, in a danger so amazing, it would even Stagger and Distract, all the Reason of Mankind could it possibly be understood but half so great as in reality it is.

'Tis reported, the Emperour *Augustus* wondred how a *Roman* Gentleman could have his Senses so strongly bound by the Silken Chains of Sleep, having contracted so great Debts, as he had not wherewith to satisfie his Creditors; having therefore expos'd his House-hold-stuff to Sale, the Emperour would needs buy the Pillow yielding so Sweet Repose and Rest.

How then may we admire the Supine negligence of them, who usually go to Bed, expecting a soft Slumber to steal upon their Eyes, when they are Infinitely Indebted to God by their Sins, yet seldom or never examine their Accounts, or prove Supplicants to the Throne of Grace, that God would Pardon their Sins, and do away their Offences.

What is it then, O dull and and sinful Soul, which makes thee thus confident in thy State? What Evasion canst thou make for thy Non-repentance? What excuse for this Progress in Sin, and little regard of its Remission? Dost thou say,

Thou confessest thy self a Sinner of no small degree, but God is Merciful and you hope for Salvation through that Mercy, and the Merits of Jesus Christ? These, though the common, yet are but weak Arguments for Christians expectation; for though without Controversy, God is a God of Mercy, and easily entreated; still he is a God of Justice, expecting to be feared: As he is my Father, he will be compassionate, but as he is my Sovereign, he must be obeyed.
Christ,

Christ, I acknowledge, hath abundantly satisfied for the Redemption of all descending from the loyns of *Adam* ; But must we therefore neglect the means of Salvation, and the end of our Hope, Eternal Life ?

Come, tell me I beseech you, wherefore did Christ die and shed his Blood, was it only for your and my Pardon ; did He bear the Cross, that We might bear none ? Or was it the design of his Death to get us a Dispensation from Holy Living ? Or rather, was not this his end and purpose, by keeping us from dying, to make us alive to God ? By denying himself, to invite us to take up our Cross, and follow him, and not to procure us a Liberty to execute our Will and Pleasure ?

St. Peter confirms this Doctrine, *For he died, that we being dead to Sin should live unto Righteousness*, 1 Pet. 2. 24. So that unless we live to Righteousness, his Scourges will not save us from the Lash : His Crucifixion will be insignificant unto us, if we do not Crucifie our Carnal Appetites ; nor will his Death ransom us from dying, if our Sins still live.

For can we think so dishonourable of Christ, as to make him a Cherisher of such Traytors ? Does he take care for their Protection, and set up a Sanctuary to which they may boldly flee ? Is the Altar of the *Cross* an *Asylum*, or Refuge, for those who gather themselves together against the Lord, and against his Anointed. Are the unmanly Sensualities of the World so highly favoured by God, that he will send his Legate, *à Latere*, Son from his Bosom to die in defence, and behalf of them ? How gross a mistake is this ! when the Pardon and Forgiveness of our Sins, was not so much intended by the Death of Christ, as the Purifying of our Hearts and Lives ; and therefore St. Paul (as well as the other mention'd place of St. Peter) tells us, *That Christ gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from this present World,* (that
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is) By shewing his willingness to pass by our Faults, he would even melt and win us to acknowledge our Trespases, to repent of them, and for the future to become more Dutiful and Obedient.

Up then quickly, O *Elijah*, Eat and Drink, for thou hast a great Journey to go: Let us up Sirs, and be doing, and not Protrigue so weighty a business any longer, endeavouring only to Reform, when alas! frail Creatures! We must cease to be! — 'Twill be too late to say, *Father I have Sinned*, when it will be only Seasonable to cry, *Corruption thou art my Father?*

For, they are not a few Death-bed Sighs will waft us over to these *Elysium* Fields: They are not a few Momentary Groans and Mournful Lamentations will Capacitate us fit Candidates for the new *Jerusalem*. Oh! the Horrour and Amazement! which will benum our Senses, when Death shall make its suddain Addresses to us, and summon us from our Beds of Security to appear before God at the Tribunal of Justice!

Will it not be too late to say then, *Lord I Repent*, when an Impartial and Severe Judge is ready to pronounce, *Go ye Cursed into Everlasting Fire?* Oh! Consider this all ye that forget God! Oh! Consider this, all ye who forget your Souls are Immortal! And now, *Before the Night cometh when no man can Work*; Let us earnestly and humbly beseech him, whose Nature and Property is always to have Mercy, and to Forgive, to receive our Humble Petitions: And though we be tyed and bound with the Chain of our Sins, yet let the Pitifulness of thy great Mercy loose us, O Lord, for the Honour of Jesus Christ our Mediator and Advocate.

Amen.

A
SERMON

PREACHED ON

Rom. vii. V. xv. last words.

— *What I hate, that do I.*

SO great and fatal was the overthrow of the Sons of men in their Original Apostasie from their God, that the whole Creation even Sigh and Groan under it.

For, though it is true, God first raising the Structure of Mankind out of nothing built it most compleatly and proportionably, there were no Errata's to be found, nothing of Imperfection, but all Fair and Lovely.

What an Accurate Harmony! what an Immaculate Beauty was found in him! A just and Regular Tendency, without the least Swerving or Deviation; for he had no inclination or proneness to Evil: For though his Body was not Beautified equally with those, which are Glorified, yet it was Dutyful and Obedient, and never remiss in paying its due Homage to the Soul.

The very Sensitive Powers were neither Factious or Seditious, but willingly subject to the Higher Powers, the Intellectual; there were no violent motions or perturbations, which since have bred such Phantacisms and Insurrections

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in the Soul; In a word, no Passion which had any tendency to Sin: May we not then stand amaz'd, may we not then admire? How so Beautiful a Creature should be soon withered? How that fragrant Breath God breathed into *Adam* should be so soon corrupted? Shall I censure the untowardness of his Will for this defect? Would not that be unjust, when it yielded so entire an observance to all the Dictates of his understanding? Or what? Shall I fault the understanding? Would not this suppose him maliciously, and on purpose to sin against God contrary to the sense of his own Judgement? And shall I entertain a thought so dishonourab'e to the first root, from whence I derive my Being? Shall I make his Offence nothing inferiour to that of the Apostate Angels thrown into Misery irrevocable? — Let us rather presume, that this understanding was defective in its office by a negligent Non-attendance; for though the Eye was clear enough, yet it was not sufficiently vigilant; though the Ballance was not deceitful, yet *Adam* forgot to weigh things therein, and so was despoiled, not only in all those Supernatural Endowments, but even wounded in all those Natural Capacities he had, to remain in an Innocent and Sinless State. Yes, and those sower Grapes he Eat, have so edged his Childrens Teeth, that they can't perform what they would, but in an impulsive manner are driven and spurr'd on by propensions, *To do what they hate.*

With how great Virtue soever a Soul is fortified, Humane Nature hath Weaknesses it cannot disavow; and how great resistance soever it make, through Principles of Virtue against irregular motions, yet if it be not supported by an especial Endowment and Providence, it must at sometimes yield and give most visible marks of Frailty; for the passions have got such an Empire over us, that we can't shake them off, so long as we remain in a state of Nature, and not of Grace; and therefore the Author of our Text speaking
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of the Imbecilities of men, he means as they are Naturally descended from *Adam*, and not as they are Enobled by the Favours of Heaven through Jesus Christ.

For, though it is true, so long, as I am a meer man, Unbaptized, and in a state of Carnality, I dwell in the Regions of Death, so that I cannot act according to Grace, but sense. Yet when I am redeemed by the Blood of Christ, I am no longer in the Dominions of Sin; I am no longer a slave, but Christs freed man, he hath Manumiz'd me, and set me at Liberty, so that I cannot then Complain, *What I hate, that do I.*

In the Prosecution of my Discourse, I shall first show you the true and genuine Cause of mans Imbecility; *That he cannot do, but what he hates.* Secondly, A possibility, yea absolute necessity of his Conquest over these Enemies of his Salvation. Thirdly, I shall answer an Enquiry. And lastly make Application.

First, We begin with the Causes of Humane Imbecilities, and though they are many, such as bad Education, evil Habits, Customs and the like; yet I shall bend my Discourse to the Primary one, Natural Corruption.

For such is the Imbecility of our Nature, ever since *Adam*, either to gratifie his Sensual Appetite, or (as I rather persuade my self) out of a complacent humour towards his young Mistress in the Garden, tasted of the forbidden Fruit, that we are incapacitated to give Life and Birth so much as to one good Thought: Holy *David* was very sensible thereof, when he cries out, *I was conceived in Sin*, Psal. 51. 5.

From the first instant of my Conception, Sin seized on me; and though that Lineal stain was cleared by Circumcision under the Law, and now by Baptism under Dispensation of the Gospel; yet there still remains a Propensity to Sin, which

which grows up with me, gaining strength through the whole course of my Adolescence.

For many years of my Age slide away, before I arrive at that ripeness to distinguish between Good and Evil ; in the Series of which time I follow without stop, or hesitation the Dictamens of Sense ; so that at the first unclasping the Windows of my Understanding, at the first peeping forth of any Rays of Light to dispel the Darkness had over-spread my Intellectuals I discover a Law Anathematizing all my former Practices, the which by many re-iterated and continued Acts are so wrought into Habit, that to break them, I must (as it were) mould my self into another Nature. This considered, together with the Dreggs and Relicks of Corruption Original Sin leaves behind, I wonder not our Apostle declare, *What I hate, that do I.*

For this Fumes, or scattered Seed of Original Sin hath a double Effect ; one, an Inclination to that which is Evil, the other a backwardness to, or a declining from that which is good : And therefore St. *Paul* tells us, *He found a Law in his Body contradicting that of his Reason.*

For though without Controversy Sin may be washed away by the Sprinkling of Water, and the Holy Ghost : Nevertheless to perfect a Cure, that I feel neither the Spice nor Itching thereof, is, in a manner impossible ; at least, it requires a long course of Remedies by a constant exercise and tryal in Virtuous Actions. For what is Sin, but

An Inordinate and Habitual Concupiscence in the Sensitive part ; so radicated, that it becomes, as it were, a Portion of Nature ? Whence *Seneca* did affirm, *Virtues are rarely, or never acquir'd without a Master, but we quickly grow expert in Vice without the help of any Teacher.* All which proclaims the pernicious consequences of our first Parents Offence.

Nay further, let us look into our Breasts, and tell me I Pray, are not you, and I, sensible, that many Actions we do are highly Offensive to the God whom we Worship, and injurious to our own Souls; yet still we are hurried on by that violent vehemency of Natural Inclinations we cannot but Act them.

Thus the Poet brings in *Medea* speaking, *I understand, saith she, that the Cutting, or Tearing my little Babes into bits and pieces, is a most horrid Crime, and I ought not to commit it, but my Passion overcomes my Reason.* Thus he in the Tragedy did confess, *I am not ignorant of those things thou Admonishest me against, I am satisfied I ought not to be guilty of them, but my Nature forceth me contrary to my Opinion.* And what was this smart Doom, a proness to do Evil, but a just retaliation for our Disobedience! For since the Soul had been Disobedient to her Creator, what higher Justice could there be, than that the Body in requital should rise up in Rebellion against the Soul, and punish her by the same Engines she had made use of in her prevarication.

Flesh and Blood may censure it hard and severe, but it is not most just, that God should punish Millions of men, for the Transgression of one?

For seeing (if *Adam* had been Obedient) that transcendant Happiness promised to him, had been Entailed on you, and me, and all his Posterity; why shou'd not I, and you, and all that descend from that Fountain, share (by his Fall) in the Pain due to his Transgression? It may indeed fill us full of doubts and perplexities to consider man in this tottering condition, that he cannot do the good he desires, or flee from the Evil he hates and abominates; because we know not by what strange bewitching means our Will (impair'd by sin) is hamper'd in a kind of necessity; yes, and in such a manner, as neither the necessity, (because voluntary) can plead excuse for our consent; nor can the Will
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being allured, scarce break through the necessity, because this necessity is in a sort voluntary. How can I resemble it better, than to a kind of Amorous Violence working by Flattery, and Flattery by Force; Whence the Will, having once consented to Sin, can hardly dis-engage herself, nor yet find Arguments enough to excuse what she hath done. No marvail then that *Job* complains, *Lord I suffer Violence, it is only you who impose, the necessity can Answer for me.* And a little after he cries, *O thou Ruler of men, why hast thou set me against thee?*

I have read *Philo* the Jew speaking of Original Sin, gives it a term of *Infinity*, *That being once set on a flame, can never be extinguish'd; it is an Immortal Evil, by no Death or Desolation to be destroyed.*

Search I pray into your selves, and there you will find the truth of this *Phylosophy*: For though Baptism hath clear'd the Channel, so as the streams of Grace may run, yet there are certain Exhalations issuing from that Corruption, always ready to fall and Embody with the Current; so that, if there be not a continual care and sifting, it will be morally impossible to preserve our Souls pure and unspotted.

How plentifully are we furnished with the Examples of those, who conceited themselves like Cedars, elevated to an high pitch of Virtue (by a presumption of their own strength) engaging themselves in hazardous Tryals, have been ignominiously blasted, and reduced to the poor fate of a weak shrub? *Lucifer* enamoured of his own Perfections, and by his sawcy Affectation of a Parity with God, became the most Abject of Creatures. Did you never read *St. Peter*, promising wonders of his constant Fidelity to his Master, yet he sufficiently testified (by that shameful denial of him) what man is, void and destitute of the supports and aids of Grace?

The Charms of *Dalilah*, the Powers of *Rathesba*, or the Conquering Eyes of the Daughters of *Egypt*, could not be resisted by that *Triumvirate* of Holy Worthies, *Sampson*, *David* or *Solomon*.

How sensible was Holy *Job*, that Prodigy of Humane Constancy, of the Proclivity of Humane Nature to that which is evil, insomuch he falls with bitterness upon the very day in which he was born, *Wishing it might perish, and never be reckoned among days in the course of the Zodiack*.

Nay, may not that Royal Prophet come in for a sad example, may not his Confession, *I was conceived in Sin*, serve a monument to Posterity, that they may reflect, what man is, from the first instant of his Conception, and though he may be raised and enobled by Gods Favour; yet he tells us, what we must trust to when left to our selves, *Upon the subtraction of thy Spirit, O Lord, we sink and resolve into the dust, from whence we came all covered, and besmeared with the stains of Sin*.

Now judge, what higher Justice can there be, that because man in Paradise did not do, what he could, and might have done, he should now out of Paradise have a desire to do that he is not able to perform?

'Tis nothing strange then, St. *Paul* cries, *Like a Captive*, *Αλλ' ὅμιλω, τὴν πάλιν, What I hate, that do I,*

An Expression, which might terrify the most daring of the Sons of men, was it not sweetned by that Confession of his, *That there is a Power of Grace contradicting this Predominancy of Nature*, and therefore he warns us, *Μὴ ἔν βασιλεύτω ἡ ἁμαρτία ἐν τῷ θνητῷ ὑμῶ σώματι, Rom. 6. 12.* Not to let Sin reign in our Mortal Bodies, intimating, *That though there be Seeds of Tumults and Seditions sowed within us, yet we have Arms and Strength sufficient (if we adhere to God) to crush and frustrate all their insolencies.*

Which is the second Particular.

Secondly, The Favourite-Disciple hath declared, *He that saith he hath not sinned, is a Liar*; But what of all this? Cannot Sin be avoided? Must we commit it always? Cannot the Works of the Devil be destroyed? *Hast thou sinned, do so no more*, was the Aphorism of *Ben-Sirah*; And said Christ, *Behold thou art made whole, sin no more*, John 5. 14.

Now what idle? what Impertinent Admonitions are they, if we cannot suppress those Traytors which labour to undoe us? Why do we solemnly Assemble our selves together? Why are we attentive to the Preachings of the Gospel? Why do we, who are stiled the Watchmen of *Israel*, spend our Breath, and our Lungs? Is it only to tickle our Ears and exhort us to Impossibilities? Or rather, is it not to inform us, that strong Resolutions; and serious Promises of Amendment, may baffle the Temptations of the Devil, and rout a whole Army of such Uncircumcised *Philistines*, as have set themselves in Battle Array against our Happiness? For, as in the state of Nature, nothing of God dwells in us, so when Christ reigns and rules in our Hearts, none other shall be Lord over us.

The *Ark*, and *Dagon* cannot stand together, neither can I serve God and *Belial*; *But he that is born of God overcometh the World*. This is impossible to them who remain in a state of Nature, but what Nature cannot do, will be effected by the Blessed Influence of the Holy Spirit; what we cannot do for our selves, God can do for us, and with us. *I can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth me, not of my self, but by the Grace of God co-operating with me*; God and man can do it together; So that, if it can be accomplished by any of those means God hath put into my Power, will not the Natural conclusion be this, that my good will, and intentions will not be taken in commutation, for the zeal and actual mortification of my Sins? He

He that sins, and flatters himself to sin contrary to his Will, and against his Inclination; may justly conclude his Heart to be Treacherous and False; for is it possible for me to Pray for a Deliverance, and not have the event of my Petitions, unless I ask amiss? Shall a man Labour, and his Labours not Crowned with a Prosperous Success, unless he Labours Deceitfully? It is therefore gross absurdity, for a man to Hugg and Cokes himself with the fond conceit, his Heart is good, his Intentions Honest, and though he sometimes fall, 'tis a slip of Nature, Weakness, and Infirmary, yea he could no ways help it; because, if I do not perform what I desire, and ought to do, I confess my self to sin against the Dictates of my own Conscience: And, will that extenuate, or rather is it not an Aggravation of my Crime, that the checks of my Conscience could not deter me from the Commission of it?

What a poor Plea! what a sad Apology! will it be, at the Great and Dreadful Tribunal of Heaven, for me to confess, I know the Acting, or Living thus, and thus, so, and so, was notoriously bad, offending my God, and prejudicing my Soul, but the pleasantness of the Company, the Humouring a Friend, the greatness of the Temptation could not be withstood; for were it not for Temptations, how could we maintain our Warfare against the three Cardinal Enemies of mans Salvation, *Sin, the World, and the Devil?*

These are our Enemies, we are the Souldiers must fight the Battles of the Lord; our meaning cannot be good, if we do not valiantly withstand all oppositions. For it is not enough that I speak like an Angel, Pray with great zeal and vehemency of Spirit; if (my Devotions Consummated) I prove as Passionate as ever, as Waspish as an amazed or disturbed Fly, if I be Refractory to the Government of my Countrey; if I Censure the Actions of my Prince, or ridicule the Demeanours of them placed in Authority

thority under him ; if I be Unjust to my Neighbour, Cruel in my Bargains, or proud like a little *Indian* Prince.

What signifie all the flourishes of Religion, the gay expressions of Devotion, my lifted up Eyes and Hands to Heaven, if I continue regardless of Reproof, Covetous, high, unbridled Passions! All that Purity and Saintship, all that Spiritual Life I pride my self in, is nothing more, than Spiritual Fancy and Illusion, whilst I am under the Power of my unruly Desires, so that I contentedly follow and am led by them!

I pray tell me, do not we censure it difficult, and uneasie to be guilty of the madness of those who talk splendidly of Religion, yet practice nothing less.

The common Swearer cannot forbear his habituated and accustomed sin, yet if he Discourses of the Authority of the Bible, and Principles of Religion, one would think him a Saint ; and those persons themselves, who speak so bravely, imagine they cannot Act, so much as they Discourse ; yet both of them are under the Power of their respective Sins, and are equally deceived, for neither are the Servants of God ; yet there is no necessity to do this, because we are obliged, yes, and (God hath commanded me to tell you also) it is in our Power to do better if we please : Thus you may hear the Apostle.

Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the Lusts of the Flesh, for the Spirit lusteth against the Flesh, and Flesh against the Spirit, Gal. 5. 16, and 17. Where he means,

That as there is a State of Carnality (before Baptism or Regeneration) in the which, a man cannot but be in Awe and Subjection to the Flesh ; so there is a state of Spirituality (after Regeneration) when Sin is dead, and Righteousness is alive, and in this state the Flesh can no more get the Conquest, then the Spirit could be Victor in the other.

I dare not deny it, such is the sad condition of some men, that they cannot but Sin, because the Apostle hath told me, *The Carnal mind is not subject to God, nor can be*, Rom. 8. 7.

There are others, in like manner, who cannot endure the least tendency to Sin; to a mild and peaceable disposition, how disagreeable is the Nature of a Contentious, wrangling person, to a Sober and Temperate person, how tedious is the Company of Hectoring Debauchees, To a Chast and Modest person? how shameful are Prostitutions and Beastialities of Lust? Consider this, and tell me, is it impossible for a person whose mind is built upon Righteousness to resist those snares and direct Treasons against the Soul? Thus you may hear the bosom-Disciple breathing it out, *He that is born of God doth not commit sin, nor can he, because he is born of God.*

Can a corrupt Tree have good, or a good Evil Fruit flourishing thereon? Things most nauseous and disgusting to the Palate, or the sharpest punctures to the Pupil of the Eye, cannot be so offensive, and irksome, as Sin to one Regenerate and born anew.

For where is the Person, show me a man but of common Prudence, and Ordinary Reputation in the World, would be tempted upon the Padd: What price would purchase him to Murther his Brother, or the Dearest of his Friends?

May not our dayly converse with the World acquaint us, that men, who are none of the great Sages, and eminent Hero's for Parts and Understanding, yet have Power sufficient to Conquer the greatest Sins? And what? Shall I be Crowned with the *Olive Branches* and *Palms*, shall I erect Trophies for my Victory over *Goliath*? Can I conquer the Sons of the Gyant, and stoutest of the Sons of *Anack*? And shall I at last be captivated by the weak Forces of the little Children of *Gath*? I remember I have read of *Achilles*,
Falling.

Falling into the River Xanthus, that he was not so much terrified at the grim Countenance of Death, as the manner of it ; Had Hector slain him in the Field, he had died with the satisfaction of its Glory ; but to be drowned in the River like a little Boy, was a Fate more becoming a smooth-fac'd Narcissus, then a Warlike Achilles.

How unworthy then is it for a Christian, to prefer an easie, and entire Conquest over the Greatest, and at last be enslaved by the subtile Artifices of a leis Temptation ? Could the poor possessed man, who lived in the Tombs, by the Powers of the Devil, break his Iron Chains in pieces ? and cannot I, assisted with the Influences from above, break the Chains of Sin, and cast away its Cords from me ? If the Lord of Hosts be on my part, who dare offend, who can oppose me ? For were we so Wise and Valiant, as not to afright our selves with our own shadows, we shou'd find, by the Encouragements of Gods Spirit, that he who is with us, is mightier, than they who are against us ; *Michael* and his Angels are not only more Powerful and numerous, than the old Dragon and his supposed Strengths, but also more loving and careful to do us good : Did we not therefore look through the discoloured Mediums of our own polluted Nature ? Was not the Eye of our Souls tintured by the suffusions of Lust, we should soon find our Strengths greater, then we imagine ? For did we seriously weigh things in their proper ballance, we might observe an Heroick Vigour in all Goodness, and an Imbecility in Evil only.

Furthermore, if by the assistance of Grace, I can't prove myself more than Conqueror over Temptations, why should I rejoyce, when I fall into a variety and abundance of them ? Or, can I imagine, that God, who remembers I am but Dust, and knows whereof I am made ; who is better acquainted with my Form and Figure than I myself am, wou'd he impose any thing upon me, but what he knows is absolutely in my Power to perform ?

Now

Now you may observe both God and his Church, bind every Christian at his first Admission into Covenant, by the most Solemn Tye to resist Temptations.

The Substance of which Oath in Baptism, is,

I. N. or M. do here in the presenee of God the Father, our Lord Jesus Christ, and all the Heavenly Host, devote my self to the Services of my God; I call Heaven and Earth, Angels and Saints, the Church Militant and Triumphant, to bear witness, that I renounce the World, Flesh, and the Devil, and that I will resist their Temptations unto my last breath: This I avow to be my Resolution; and upon this account, and this only, I now desire to enter into Covenant with my God, and be Initiated and Admitted a Member of his Church; and I call my Conscience to Record this day, that I will never repent of this Promise, nor revoke it, but continue Christs Faithful Souldier and Servant unto my Lives end. So help me O my God. Amen.

Now this being the form of our Oath in Baptism, which we renew at our Confirmation, and repeat every time we Communicate at the Lords Table; we can certainly conclude it is to be performed; for can we fancy to our selves, God and his Church would urge us to Impossibilities, and engage us to what cannot be effected? No certainly, for if men be perswaded the Sins they commit, are irresistible, why do they Sorrow and Repent, for what is past? Why do they contradict themselves, and put a mock upon Heaven by promising Amendment for the future? Instead of Confessing, why do they not rather Expostulate with God, and say,

'Tis true, O Lord, I have done many things amiss, as I have been Informed by the Parson, who calls himself thy Minister, and trouble the World by thy Authority; which if they be offensive, I protest, O my God, I could not help them, I had not Power to resist them: If therefore thou wouldst have me for the future perform thy express Words and Commandments, and

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practice those Duties our Preachers inculcate; thou must assist me with a greater stock of Grace, than hitherto thou hast furnished me withall.

Now can I presume any so horribly Profane, so ridiculously Wicked to Pray after this method, and utterly confound those two absolutely necessary parts of Repentance, Confession and Contrition.

If it be thus, I dare boldly affirm it, the greatest Sins we are tempted to commit, are no Sins at all? But indeed God will be justified in his sayings, and found clear when he is judged, for there is no thinking circumspect man (if he applies the Grace of God) can be over-matched by any Tryal, or meet a Temptation, that is irresistible: For if I can conquer Sin in the Mountains and Strong holds, I need not doubt but to baffle him in the Plains and Valleys; if I can overcome those great and Gigantick Sins of Idolatry, Adultery, Fellony Treason and the like, why may I not escape those of a lesser magnitude, such as Pamphleting the Government, and Libelling Authority, such as Lying and Slandering, Cheating and Cousening, Back-biting and Speaking evil one of another? Shall a Pigmye subdue the Crane? or a Dwarfse prove Conquerour of a Gyant? Can I go upon the Lyon and the Adder, and shall a Frog or a Worm disorder me? Did not Christ come to redeem to himself a Church, and to present it, without Spot or Blemish, before the Throne of Grace? Now, how can We be of this number, and not under that qualification, *Void of Offence towards God, and towards Man.*

Thirdly. Some may enquire, how far we must proceed in Righteousness that we may get a Conquest and Mastery over our Nature; and be free from those Imbecilities, in saying, *What I hate, that do I.*

To which I answer, There is no set or determinate degree of Endeavour, but even as much as we can, or are able:

able: There is no size or Standard, the Excess of which would appear Monstruous; But Religion is like unto the flawless Diamond, where bigness taxes the value, and the unusual bulke both rates, and Enhances the Lustre and the Price: To give God all that I can is the great command both of the Law, and of the Gospel.

For so noble is the nature of Religion, that it admits of failings but by one of the Extremes, that of Defect. Mediocrity, which in other Passions is an Excellency, is here an Imperfection.

It being therefore impossible for us to be too Loyal and Obedient, too Religious and Dutyful, we must make it the business of our Lives, the Care of our Thoughts, our only Concern and greatest Imployment in the World, *To be Holy as God is Holy*; abstaining from all things whatever that can impede or hinder the promotion and growth of an Holy Life; for what is our chiefest righteousness better then Menstruous Raggs, if the Lord was extreme to mark what we have done amiss? After our very Innocency (which otherwise wou'd appear stain'd) may through the merits of Christ prove acceptable unto God; whatsoever thou findest in thy Heart to do, perform it with all thy might and vigour. He that will live according to the exact Rules of Christianity, must bend his Nerves and Sinews, do his utmost towards the demolishing all the Strong-holds of Satan: For we can never be clean and free from all Sin, until we have done our best and utmost towards the Mortification of it, for until that be done, how can we be satisfied where the blame and fault resteth, or whether it can be effected, or not?

If any man can profess, that Purity of Life, and strictness of Conversation, as to assert, that he hath endeavoured to husband and employ his Talent of Grace to the most proper and best advantage; that he hath Endur'd as much

as is possible to be Endur'd, that he hath Loved as much as he could Love, that he hath Watched till he can Watch no longer; my Soul for his, that Man is blameless in the sight of God, because God hath commanded me to tell you, he does not expect Brick, where he does not afford Straw; he accepteth of what a man hath, requiring nothing which he is not able to perform.

For God looks into my Heart, and enquires, if That be right, if I have no Rebellion in Thought, as well as Act, if I have no affections to Sin, no glances to Temptations? If I have liquorish desires after the Onyons and Garlick, or Flesh-pots of *Egypt*; if I apply all prudent and effectual methods to Mortifie my Sins; In a word, if I be sincere and real in my Actions and Intentions: For, unless God (at his coming) find us in this Sinless state, we must never expect the Blessing of his Kingdom; But if he does, my Soul for yours, we shall undoubtedly be saved by the Blood of Christ.

For consult the Histories of all the most vile and wicked men that ever had a Being upon Earth, and as you will find few or none, but sometimes or other performing some good Action; and yet that Action did not interrupt, or put stop to their courses of Impiety; so the most Religious or Pious Souls in like manner, have their Indiscretions and Mistakes, Failings and Errors; sometimes doing that which is Wicked and Sinful: Nevertheless, because their Hearts stand most firm and right towards God, He in Mercy will not impute those over-sights to Eternal Condemnation. The sweet Singer of *Israel* is a Royal Instance to confirm this Doctrine, *He was a man after Gods own Heart*; Nay the Text tells you, *He was blameless, save only in the matter of Uriah*.

Nevertheless, did you never read, how he numbred the People; and can you not plainly read the Characters of Divine Wrath in that severe Judgement wherewith he Plagued his People for this his Transgression; Yet still because *Da-*

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vid was a good man, serving God with an upright Heart, not intending to disoblige him, but committing this Sin through inadvertency, it was not imputed to him. In short,

If I endeavour all that I can to arrive at the Perfection I am capacitated for, and do what lyes in me to inherit the Promise, if I Labour and Hope for it, using the most ready and probable means, (not being deluded by the cunning Arts of a false and treacherous Heart) I shall stand upright in the Congregation of the Just; and though I cannot, with the *Romanist*, challenge Heaven by Merit, yet I shall find it as my Saviour hath told me, *My Fathers good pleasure to give me a Kingdom.*

The Conclusion.

Fourthly, Thus you have the Imbecilities of Man natural, together with a Possibility, as well as absolute Necessity of their Conquest by man Spiritual and Regenerate: For the Devil, as Potent and Crafty as he is, cannot ravish our Wills, nor force our Inclinations; the worst he can do, is to prompt and perswade, to watch Advantages, and administer suitable Sollicitations, but cannot compel us to entertain them.

No man is undone or ruin'd Eternally, but himself is the Cause of it; he that would not, cannot be overcome, provided he keep his Resolutions fix'd and stedfast. This is the true way of Conquest and Victory over Satan, *Resist the Devil, and he will flee from you*, Jam. 4. 7. If we do but make good our ground, his Temptations will vanish and disappear. What remains? but that we be strong in the Lord, and in the Power of his might; that we take unto our selves the whole Armour of God, and be thereby enabled to stand against the Wiles of the Devil?

Let us Reverence the Greatness and Nobility of our Natures, being born anew, they are of too Divine a Frame and Temper, than to be Prostituted and Defiled: Let all

opportunities and occasions of Vice be avoided, with a quick and jealous care : A Temptation is easilier prevented, than removed, when once it has thrust it self upon the Sinner. We should frequently review our Lives, and call our Actions to a severe and impartial Account and Examination, that we may know what is their Spring and Fountain, what their Tendency and Inclination, and what will be the Consequence and Issue of them ; and that if the Politick Enemy of ours have conveyed in a Suggestion in disguise, we may pull off the Mask and resent it in its proper Form and Figure. And this reckoning ought to be enquir'd into, so soon as ever we have sinned, or we know that he hath gotten the upper-hand over us ; for the less Sin hath prevail'd, the easier the Fight, and Conquest more certain ; But if he have had much better of us, the Argument is more forcible, because we have the more to do, and therefore we must begin by times. The longer our Journey, the more early we must set out ; we must not defer this Labour till it be render'd more difficult by Age, or impossible by Death. Nothing more true, than short Tarryings create long Journeys ; if we neglect the Duties of our Sprightly years, our Journey will be more tedious, when our Vigour is decaying, and we are weaken'd by Age. Oh ! Blessed *Pythagoreans* ! who were taught every night to call themselves to an Account for the Actions of the preceding day !

Sextius the *Philosopher*, never used to go to Bed, 'till he had first Expostulated with himself, saying,

What Evil Habit have I cured to day ? What Vice have I resisted ? Wherein am I better than I was before ? Oh ! let Us imitate those brave Examples, and accustom our selves to this excellent course, and then we shall quickly find our Victory over sin far more easie and feazable. That then which we do, let us do quickly, whilst the Marrow swells in our Bones, and our Blood be hot, and boils within our Veins, be-

before Evil days come, and we be snatch'd away, and there be none to deliver us. I Pray tell me, are not You and I, and all the Members of the *Catholick Church*, desirous to end our days in Religion and Piety? To die in the Arms and Embraces of our *Holy Mother* the Church? To expire and breathe our last under the safe care and conduct of some Godly Religious Minister? When we are Sick and returning our Souls to him, who lent them, then nothing but Prayers and doleful Complaints? The Groans of Timorous Repentance; and the faint Labours of an almost impossible Mortification? Yes, and least your Souls should miscarry, we presently dispatch a little Mercury or Messenger for the despised Parson. Then, and only Then, we look upon our Priest, (so much laugh'd at in our Plays, and made the *May-game* of our Stage) as a *Barnabas*, or Son of Consolation; then we adjudge him as a Messenger or Physician sent from God to heal our Plague-Sores; what are his Words, but Oracles? Religion, but Truth? Sin, but a burthen, and most uneasie to be born? And the Sinner more foolish than the Beasts that perish?

But I Pray Sirs, as you prize your Souls, as you value Heaven, as you expect Eternal Life, or dread the Terrors of Everlasting Burnings, seriously to consider with me, whether the Doctrines we Preach, the words we deliver, the Counsels we give, are they not as True; now whilst ye live and enjoy the Happy Priviledges of Health, as they be, when ye approach the Paths of Death? Why should they not then have the same Powerful Influence, and make that impression on our Lives now, they commonly do then? Let us then Mortifie our Sins betimes, least we never Mortifie them at all; the Fable will tell you, *The Snail out-went the Eagle, and wonne the Race, because she set out betimes*. Let us begin our Warfare, whilst it is called to day, resolving to die unto the World, that we may be found alive unto God.

God : Let us grow in Grace, going on to Perfection till we arrive at the full measures of the stature of Christ, and into the perfect Liberty of the Sons of God; so that we shall not complain in the Text, *What I hate, that do I*; but hate what God hates, doing nothing that is forbidden, not by virtue of our own Strength or Power, but because Christ is our Strength, and he dwells in us, and we in him. Grant us Grace therefore we beseech thee, O Lord, to withstand the Temptations of World, the Flesh, and the Devil, and with pure Hearts and Minds to follow thee the only God, through Jesus Christ our Lord, *Amen.*

F I N I S.
